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The
NEW
TESTAMENT
of the Holy Bible

— A LIVING WORD —

CONFERNITY VERSION

With introductions and annotations by
Reverend Joseph A. Caputo, S.M., S.S.L.



The "Good-News" of the New Testament will be clearer to you with this edition than it ever has been. New insights presented in fascinating introductions, latest annotations, comparative tables and new maps will illumine your reading of the sacred text and elevate familiarity to understanding of Christ's message.

"The word of God, which is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe is set forth and shows its power in a most excellent way in the writings of the New Testament."

DOUGLASS INSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION V 17.

THIS ANNOTATED edition of the New Testament is to serve the same purpose as our edition of the Old Testament, which is: to offer a readable, up-to-date book of Holy Scripture to the layman and student. It also attempts to give the best distillation of the interpretations laid down by modern Catholic biblical scholarship. In a sense, then, it may be called a textbook of biblical interpretations.

The New Testament is in greater need of an annotated edition than the Old Testament, for whereas many people admit openly that they do not understand the Old Testament, this admission is not made so frequently, as it perhaps should be, concerning the New Testament. If our introductions and annotations will make the reader progress from familiarity to something higher than a fundamentalistic interpretation of the Word of God, then they will have achieved the most desired goal.

Father Grispingo offers his commentaries in the spirit of the ecumenical movement. The interpretation of Sacred Scripture in this edition, governed by exegetical, philological and historical sciences, tends to bring more agreement among those whose faith is founded on the Bible. It is his hope that persons of all faiths will find in this volume guidance and inspiration.

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Joseph A. Grispingo, S.M., S.S.L.

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THE
NEW TESTAMENT

THE
NEW
TESTAMENT
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST

WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOTATIONS BY
REV. JOSEPH A. GRISPINO, S.M., S.S.L.

THE BIBLICAL TEXT IS TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN VULGATE

*A Revision of the Challoner-Rheims Version
Edited by Catholic Scholars
Under the Patronage of*

THE EPISCOPAL COMMITTEE OF THE
CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE



An Angelus Book

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PREFACE

This annotated edition of the New Testament is to serve the same purpose as our edition of the Old Testament, which is: to offer a readable, up-to-date book of Holy Scripture to the layman and student. It also attempts to give the best distillation of the interpretations laid down by modern Catholic biblical scholarship. In a sense, then, it may be called a textbook of biblical interpretations. This is a significant feature, for it has been one of our main objectives to bring into focus at least all the commonly acknowledged "form critical" interpretations explained by Catholic Gospel scholars.

The New Testament is in greater need of an annotated edition than the Old Testament, for whereas many people admit openly that they do not understand the Old Testament, this admission is not made so frequently, as it perhaps should be, concerning the New Testament. Most people believe to be more familiar with it than with the Old Testament—and that is precisely the point. Many a person has been lulled by his or her alleged familiarity with the New Testament text into equating this familiarity with comprehension of the text. If our introductions and annotations will make the reader progress from familiarity to something higher than a fundamentalistic interpretation of the Word of God, then they will have achieved the most desired goal.

In this age of specialized biblical research nobody knows better than colleagues in scripture studies that the times have long passed when one man could be called a specialist on the whole Bible. It is even questionable whether one man can truly be called a specialist on one Testament alone, Old or New. It is, thus, obvious, that an annotated Bible should be the work of a committee of experts, notwithstanding that the work is intended for the layman and student. Equally obvious, however, is that such a feat presents too many practical problems. In brief, the main reason for embarking on this daring enterprise has been the desire to satisfy a need deeply felt in the world of Catholic biblical literature in English, a need that simply had not been satisfied.

On occasion the name of an expert will appear in parentheses to indicate that his opinion is being summarized. In these instances the undersigned assumes the responsibility for the accuracy of the exposition. (See, f.i., A. Feuillet, in Ap 11, 1-2 n.) In this connection the undersigned wishes to express his indebtedness to his former professor, Father S. Lyonnet, S.J.

Father Lyonnet's lectures in Rome and especially his French commentary in the *Verbum Salutis* series have provided more than the warp and woof for the annotations on the epistle to the Romans. The reader should be aware of the fact that the New Testament writers nearly always quoted the Old Testament not from the Hebrew but from the Greek Bible. Therefore, the Old Testament quotations as given in the present New Testament CCD translation do not correspond with the English wording of the same quotations contained in the Old Testament.

The reader will often notice that annotations to quotations used by a sacred New Testament author from the writings of an Old Testament author, state: "The New Testament author 'rereads' or 'reinterprets' the Old Testament text to mean that . . . etc." This terminology expresses a new trend. In these annotations, the statement "the New Testament author rereads or reinterprets" means that a neutral position is taken. In other words, instead of saying: the New Testament writer uses the "fuller sense" (the existence of which is denied by many outstanding scholars) or: he uses the typical sense (which is rare and disputed) or: he accommodates the quoted text, the annotations say: the New Testament author rereads or reinterprets. In this way the focus is on the *meaning* given by the New Testament writer to the Old Testament text. However, when the New Testament author literally quotes the Old Testament, or obviously accommodates the quoted text or when he, in the opinion of many scholars, uses a standard typical sense, these variations will be indicated. The frequent mention made in the annotations of this book to the Old Testament and to explanatory material included therein as, for instance, introductions to single books or groups of books, annotations to chapter(s) and verse(s), and to maps, charts, tables, etc., refer to the 1965 Guild Press edition of the Old Testament.

May this work assist teachers in realizing one of their greatest ideals, namely, to make the student read all of the New Testament and not only all about it. Finally, this wish: may the introductions and annotations in this edition exemplify the words spoken about Scripture in Vatican Council II: "For there is growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers. . . ." (The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine revelation, November 18, 1965).

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*Their names and order, number of chapters, page numbers,
and abbreviations used in this edition*

CHS.	PG.			CHS.	PG.		
28	29	St. Matthew	Mt	3	682	2 Thessalonians	2 Thes
16	145	St. Mark	Mk	6	690	1 Timothy	1 Tm
24	207	St. Luke	Lk	4	703	2 Timothy	2 Tm
21	316	St. John	Jn	3	711	Titus	Ti
28	411	Acts of		1	717	Philemon	Phlm
		the Apostles	Acts	13	720	Hebrews	Heb
16	511	Romans	Rom	5	748	St. James	Jas
16	557	1 Corinthians	1 Cor	5	758	1 St. Peter	1 Pt
13	596	2 Corinthians	2 Cor	3	770	2 St. Peter	2 Pt
6	618	Galatians	Gal	5	779	1 St. John	1 Jn
6	635	Ephesians	Eph	1	791	2 St. John	2 Jn
4	651	Philippians	Phil	1	794	3 St. John	3 Jn
4	662	Colossians	Col	1	796	St. Jude	Jude
5	673	1 Thessalonians	1 Thes	22	801	Apocalypse	Ap

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Miscellaneous Abbreviations

ch., chs.	chapter, chapters
e.g.	for example
Heb.	The Hebrew of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament
i.e.	that is
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
n.	annotation
Sep.	Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament
Vg.	Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible
v., vv.	verse, verses
par	parallel passage(s)
CCD	Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (translation)
[]	indicates an uninspired gloss in the New Testament (unlike the brackets in the Old Testament. See, e.g., Mt 23, 14).
	indicates verse beginning where this is not otherwise clear

How to Read the References

- Rom 5, 6—means the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 6.
 Jer 2, 1.8—means Jeremia, chapter 2, verse 1 and verse 8.
 Ex 7, 14-18, 20-21, 24—means Exodus, chapter 7, verses 14 to 18, verses 20 to 21, and verse 24 of the same chapter.
 Mt 9, 4-8—means the Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 9, verses 4 to 8.
 Gn 48, 10—49, 6—means Genesis, chapter 48, verse 10 to chapter 49, verse 6 inclusive.
 2 Pt 2, 3; 3, 10—means the second Epistle of Saint Peter, chapter 2, verse 3; and chapter 3, verse 10 of the same epistle.
 Dt 13—14—means Deuteronomy, chapter 13 to chapter 14 inclusive.
 Ps 5, 2f—means Psalm 5, verse 2 and the following verse 3.
 Ps 5, 2ff—means Psalm 5, verse 2 and the following verses.
 See Acts 15, 8 n.—means there is an annotation on Acts, chapter 15, verse 8. The scripture text and the annotation should be consulted.
 v. 16a; v. 11b—means the first part of verse 16; the second part of verse 11.

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THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS OF SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS

Feast	Epistle	Gospel
1st Sunday of Advent	Rom 13, 11-14	Lk 21, 25-33
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Prv 8, 22-35	Lk 1, 26-28
2d Sunday of Advent	Rom 15, 4-13	Mt 11, 2-10
3d Sunday of Advent	Phil 4, 4-7	Jn 1, 19-28
4th Sunday of Advent	1 Cor 4, 1-5	Lk 3, 1-6
Christmas (first Mass)	Ti 2, 11-15	Lk 2, 1-14
Christmas (second Mass)	Ti 3, 4-7	Lk 2, 15-20
Christmas (third Mass)	Heb 1, 1-12	Jn 1, 1-14
Sunday within the Octave of Christmas	Gal 4, 1-7	Lk 2, 33-40
Octave of the Birth of Our Lord	Ti 2, 11-15	Lk 2, 21
The Holy Name of Jesus	Acts 4, 8-12	Lk 2, 21
Epiphany of Our Lord	Is 60, 1-6	Mt 2, 1-12
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Col 3, 12-17	Lk 2, 42-52
2d Sunday after the Epiphany	Rom 12, 6-16	Jn 2, 1-11
3d Sunday after the Epiphany	Rom 12, 16-21	Mt 8, 1-13
4th Sunday after the Epiphany	Rom 13, 8-10	Mt 8, 23-27
5th Sunday after the Epiphany	Col 3, 12-17	Mt 13, 24-30
6th Sunday after the Epiphany	1 Thes 1, 2-10	Mt 13, 31-35
Septuagesima Sunday	1 Cor 9, 24-27— 10, 1-5	Mt 20, 1-16
Sexagesima Sunday	2 Cor 11, 19-33— 12, 1-9	Lk 8, 4-15
Quinquagesima Sunday	1 Cor 13, 1-13	Lk 18, 31-43
1st Sunday of Lent	2 Cor 6, 1-10	Mt 4, 1-11
2d Sunday of Lent	1 Thes 4, 1-7	Mt 17, 1-9
St. Joseph	Sir 45, 1-6	Mt 1, 18-21
3d Sunday of Lent	Eph 5, 1-9	Lk 11, 14-28
4th Sunday of Lent	Gal 4, 22-31	Jn 6, 1-15
1st Sunday of the Passion	Heb 9, 11-15	Jn 8, 46-59
Palm Sunday	Phil 2, 5-11	Mt 26, 36-75— 27, 1-60
Easter Sunday	1 Cor 5, 7-8	Mk 16, 1-7
Low Sunday	1 Jn 5, 4-10	Jn 20, 19-31
2d Sunday after Easter	1 Pt 2, 21-25	Jn 10, 11-16
3d Sunday after Easter	1 Pt 2, 11-19	Jn 16, 16-22

4th Sunday after Easter	Jas 1, 17-21	Jn 16, 5-14
5th Sunday after Easter	Jas 1, 22-27	Jn 16, 23-30
The Ascension of Our Lord	Acts 1, 1-11	Mk 16, 14-20
Sunday after the Ascension of Our Lord	1 Pt 4, 7-11	Mk 16, 14-20 Jn 15, 26-27— 16, 1-4
Pentecost Sunday	Acts 2, 1-11	Jn 14, 23-31
Feast of the Holy Trinity	Rom 11, 33-36	Mt 28, 18-20
1st Sunday after Pentecost	1 Jn 4, 8-21	Lk 6, 36-42
Feast of Corpus Christi	1 Cor 11, 23-29	Jn 6, 56-59
2d Sunday after Pentecost	1 Jn 3, 13-18	Lk 14, 16-24
3d Sunday after Pentecost	1 Pt 5, 6-11	Lk 15, 1-10
Sts. Peter and Paul	Acts 12, 1-11	Mt 16, 13-19
4th Sunday after Pentecost	Rom 8, 18-23	Lk 5, 1-11
5th Sunday after Pentecost	1 Pt 3, 8-15	Mt 5, 20-24
6th Sunday after Pentecost	Rom 6, 3-11	Mk 8, 1-9
7th Sunday after Pentecost	Rom 6, 19-23	Mt 7, 15-21
8th Sunday after Pentecost	Rom 8, 12-17	Lk 16, 1-9
9th Sunday after Pentecost	1 Cor 10, 6-13	Lk 19, 41-47
Assumption of the Bl. Virgin Mary	Jdt 13, 22-25; 15, 10	Lk 1, 41-50
10th Sunday after Pentecost	1 Cor 12, 2-11	Lk 18, 9-14
11th Sunday after Pentecost	1 Cor 15, 1-10	Mk 7, 31-37
12th Sunday after Pentecost	2 Cor 3, 4-9	Lk 10, 23-37
13th Sunday after Pentecost	Gal 3, 16-22	Lk 17, 11-19
14th Sunday after Pentecost	Gal 5, 16-24	Mt 6, 24-33
15th Sunday after Pentecost	Gal 5, 25-26— 6, 1-10	Lk 7, 11-16
16th Sunday after Pentecost	Eph 3, 13-21	Lk 14, 1-11
17th Sunday after Pentecost	Eph 4, 1-6	Mt 22, 34-46
18th Sunday after Pentecost	1 Cor 1, 4-8	Mt 9, 1-8
19th Sunday after Pentecost	Eph 4, 23-28	Mt 22, 1-14
20th Sunday after Pentecost	Eph 5, 15-21	Jn 4, 46-53
21st Sunday after Pentecost	Eph 6, 10-17	Mt 18, 23-35
Feast of All Saints	Ap 7, 2-12	Mt 5, 1-12
22d Sunday after Pentecost	Phil 1, 6-11	Mt 22, 15-21
23d Sunday after Pentecost	Phil 3, 17-21— 4, 1-3	Mt 9, 18-26
24th Sunday after Pentecost	Col 1, 9-14	Mt 24, 15-35

A BIBLICAL CALENDAR

NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

General History

Birth of Jesus 7 B.C.?*

Herod the Great—43-4 B.C.

A.D.

Death of Jesus 30-33

Caiphas, high priest 18-37

Conversion of Paul 39?

Council of Jerusalem 49-50

Death of Paul 63-67

Death of Peter 64? 67?

Fall of Jerusalem and
its temple 70

Death of John the
Evangelist 100?

Caesar Augustus—27 B.C.-A.D. 14

Herod Antipas—4 B.C.-A.D. 39

Tiberius—14-37

Pontius Pilate—26-36

Famine in Palestine—46?

Claudius expels the Jews—49
(Acts 18, 2)

Gallio, proconsul of Achaia—51-52

Felix, procurator—52-60?

Festus, procurator—60?-62

Nero's persecution—64

Christians flee to Pella from
Jerusalem—66-67

Vespasian—69-79

Titus—79-81

Pompeii destroyed—79

Domitian—81-96

Nerva—96-98

Trajan—98-117

}

See
Ap 17,
9-11 n

* In the sixth century the Syrian monk, Dionysius the Little, established the reckoning of time according to B.C. and A.D. Dionysius miscalculated the year of Christ's birth and so what should, according to our way our reckoning, be 1 A.D. is approximately between 5 to 8 B.C.

THE
NEW TESTAMENT

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

COME, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy spirit and they shall be created.

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray.

GOD, who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit: grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month.

INDULGENCES FOR THE READING OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

(a) *An indulgence of three years is granted to the faithful who for at least a quarter of an hour read the books of Sacred Scripture as spiritual reading with the reverence which is due the word of God.*

(b) *An indulgence of five hundred days is granted to those who piously read at least some verses of the Gospel and besides, while kissing the book of the Gospel, devoutly recite one of these invocations: "By the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out"; "May the Gospel lesson be our salvation and protection"; "May Christ the Son of God teach us the words of the holy Gospel." A plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, provided they perform the above-mentioned pious work each day for a month.*

The indulgences listed above are found in the 1950 edition of the *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (##287 and 694, respectively).

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The term "New Testament," or "new covenant," originates from the account of the Last Supper, in which these words of Jesus are given (Mt 26, 28): "This is my blood of the new covenant (testament)." The meaning of our Lord's words is that he came to save his people in a new manner, according to a new covenant that was to replace the old covenant, i.e., the Old Testament. From the end of the second century the "New Testament" referred to the inspired writings as distinguished from those of the Old Testament.

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament were composed from approximately 50 to 100 A.D. by about twelve principal inspired writers. These books, which equal one-third of the length of the Old Testament, are the four Gospels written by the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the fourteen "Pauline" epistles; the seven Catholic epistles; and the Apocalypse.

The mother tongue of almost all the New Testament authors was Aramaic, a Semitic language. Yet they composed all their writings (as we now have them) in Greek. As to the precise type of Greek used in the New Testament, many experts agree on the following path of development: from many Greek dialects it was the Attic form of Athens that emerged as the most acceptable. This has been called classical Greek before 300 B.C., and after that date (till 550 A.D.), Hellenistic Greek. Alexander the Great diffused Hellenistic Greek in eastern Mediterranean lands during his conquests (334-320 B.C.) while the Romans spread it in like fashion in western lands. Hellenistic Greek was written both in a literary and in a non-literary form (Koine). The Koine ("common") was the language in which the New Testament was written.

Some of the New Testament compositions are clothed in a better Greek than others. The epistle to the Hebrews, St. Luke's Gospel and Acts are generally praised as the best, both in vocabulary and sentence structure. (This judgment remains valid in spite of a few poorly written parts in Acts.) At the other end of the scale are St. Mark's Gospel and the Apocalypse. They feature more colloquial Koine Greek.

The spoken language of Palestine at the time of Jesus was western Aramaic. Of the three dialects of this language spoken in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, our Lord spoke the Galilean, recognizable (Mt 26, 73) by its confusing of the gutturals.

(Western Aramaic survives today in only three villages along the Syrian-Lebanese border.)

Biblical or classical Hebrew was not spoken in our Lord's day, but was confined to the written Bible. It is evident from his reading of the Bible in the synagogue (Lk 4, 16ff) that Jesus understood classical Hebrew.

Greek was currently spoken in Palestine due to the influence of Alexander the Great and of the Jews who returned from Greek speaking countries. In fact, several Palestinian centers were strongly Greek, e.g., Samaria, and many Galilean cities around the lake of Galilee. Since Jesus was a Galilean, it is probable that he spoke the language. He seems to have done so to the Chanaanite woman (Mk 7, 26) and to Pilate (Jn 18, 34ff).

HOW THE BIBLE GREW

None of the original manuscripts written by the New Testament authors has survived. This comes as no surprise as they were written on papyrus, a perishable material made from a sedge plant native to the Nile region. Yet, considering its age, the New Testament comes to us as the best preserved group of ancient manuscripts in the world. There are about 5,000 Greek copies containing all or parts of the New Testament, in contrast to the less than one hundred manuscripts extant of any classical author. Many works of classical writers have survived in only a few copies which are separated from their original composition by more than one thousand years.

The inspired authors wrote in the first century on separate papyrus rolls or scrolls, but in the second century the four Gospels were bound in papyrus codices or leaf forms, as were the epistles of St. Paul. The codex format made the grouping of these writings in one volume possible, whereas the scroll did not. The ordinary length of a Greek literary scroll rarely exceeded thirty-five feet, for a longer scroll would have been too inconvenient to handle. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts, for example, each amounted to thirty-one or thirty-two feet in length.

Translations from the Greek into Latin and Syriac were made in the second century. It was only in the fourth century that all the New Testament was bound in one volume. This was the century of vellum (fine parchment) codices and of translations from the Greek New Testament into other languages besides Latin and Syriac. From this century and the one following came some of the best preserved and most complete New Testament Greek codices.

The fifth century saw many, but poorly translated, Latin Bibles. St. Jerome's translation of the complete Bible (into Latin for official Church use) became known as the Vulgate. It was of uneven value, for some parts were better translated than others.

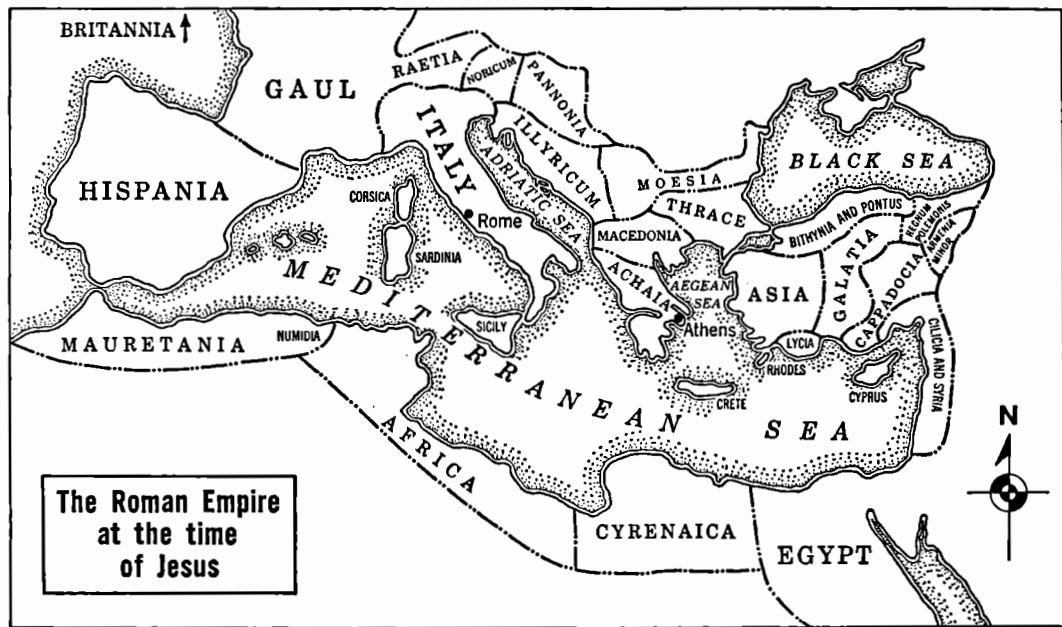
During the course of centuries a number of errors crept into the Vulgate. The Council of Trent fittingly ordered a new edition in the sixteenth century. It resulted in the Clementine Bible of 1592, which has repeatedly undergone editing without yielding significant changes. From 1907 onward the Benedictines in Rome have been working on an edition that attempts to reproduce the original Vulgate as it left the hands of St. Jerome in the fifth century.

The New Testament was translated for Catholic use from the Vulgate into English at Rheims, France, in 1582. The Old Testament was translated in 1609-10 at Douay, Belgium. Then, in 1750, Bishop Challoner was said to have revised the "Douay-Rheims Bible," but actually he made a translation from the Vulgate rather than a revision. All subsequent editions of the Challoner Bible were known by the blanket term, "Douay-Rheims," till 1941 when American scholars made a version of the New Testament from a critical edition of the Vulgate in comparison with the Greek manuscripts. However, since the 1941 translation retained the style and diction of the Challoner-Rheims translation, it is called a revision rather than a translation. The 1941 edition is called "Confraternity Version" since it was translated under the patronage of the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. This is the translation contained in this book. A new Confraternity translation from the Greek texts is in preparation.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Palestine was a bridge between Egypt and Mesopotamia, over which tramped the conquering armies of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and Greece. The Romans were the masters of the bridge when Jesus Christ entered the world. Pompey had captured Jerusalem in 63 B.C., on a Sabbath day when the Jews refused to fight. Judea fell prey to the Roman Eagle. Judea was in official Roman eyes one of the Empire's most unruly lands because of the tenacity with which the people clung to their native customs.

Herod began his rule in 43 B.C., but he was not crowned king of the Jews until four years later. He was a vassal and partisan



of Mark Antony up to the latter's defeat by Octavian at Actium in 31 B.C. The wily Herod then won the confidence of Octavian, the first Roman emperor. Since Herod was only half Jewish and therefore despised by his Jewish subjects, he established a police state rule to safeguard his throne. He methodically executed his rivals, even when they were members of his own family. Mariamne, the favorite of his ten wives, was not spared. [The famous saying of Augustus is most appropriate: Better off is Herod's pig than his son. (The Greek words for pig and son form a pun.)] Herod ruthlessly crushed revolts and punished with an iron hand. He encircled the land with fortresses, among them the fortress known as the Antonia in the area of the Jerusalem temple. Since Jewish soldiers were not to be trusted, king Herod hired mercenary troops.

Being rejected by the Jews did not discourage Herod from protecting the Jewish religion and from remaining sensitive to Jewish feeling. His sons were educated in Jewish families at Rome. He forbade portraits and images of Caesar in Palestine. Herod even obtained permission for the Jews throughout the Roman empire to practice their religion freely, and the permission continued after his death. Herod's reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple was another outstanding example of his concern for the Jews. Notwithstanding his cruelty, Herod ameliorated and beautified the kingdom, especially his showplace: Jerusalem. Yet he failed to achieve the great ambition of his reign, namely, to win over the Jews. There was a deeper reason for this failure than the fact that he was a half-Jew, and this was his disregard for the absoluteness of the Mosaic Law. The majority of the Jews, because of the Pharisees' teaching, believed that the Mosaic Law was the will of God. According to Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, the high priest was to remain in office for life. Herod, however, saw the Law just as an ordinary law of the people, not as the inviolable will of God. Moreover, the "half-Jew" feared that a high priest remaining in office for life would amass too much power and authority. So, at his own discretion, the crafty king resorted to terminating the reign of the high priest. The impasse was clear: the people hated the king for violating the Law in favor of political expediency; and the king had to safeguard his throne at all costs.

Coupled with his protection of the Jewish religion was Herod's endeavor to introduce his people to Greek philosophy, rhetoric, and history. He built the Palestinian Greek cities of Sebaste and Caesarea, and the pagan temples in Samaria and on the island of Rhodes. The king contributed to the Olympic Games and conducted his own games every four years in Caesarea and

Jerusalem. In brief, he wanted his countrymen to be like him—both Jew and Greek.

After his death in 4 B.C., Herod's kingdom was divided among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip. Archelaus inherited Idumea, Judea, and Samaria. Herod Antipas received Galilee and Perea. Herod Philip, whose mother was the famous Cleopatra, obtained the section northeast of Galilee.

Archelaus was harsh and hungry for power. St. Joseph feared him and therefore refused to return to Bethlehem in Judea, choosing instead Nazareth in Galilee which was ruled by Herod Antipas (Mt 2, 22). The New Testament mentions Archelaus only here, and the unfavorable portrait of him tallies with that found in the writings of the contemporary Jewish historian, Josephus. Archelaus was deposed after a decade.

Judea was placed under a Roman procurator in 6 A.D. Pontius Pilate who was given the procuratorial powers in 26 A.D. became the longest reigning procurator of Judea (and the most famous because of his role in the trial of Jesus). An undisguised hostility toward the Jews led to his recall to Rome in 36 A.D.

Of Herod's three sons it is Herod Antipas—the "fox" as Jesus called him (Lk 13, 32)—whom the New Testament most frequently mentions. This is the Herod who married his half brother's wife, Herodias (the mother of Salome) and incurred the wrath of John the Baptist (Mk 6, 18). To please Herodias, Herod Antipas pleaded with the Roman emperor, Gaius, for the title of king. In reply, Gaius exiled him to what is presently Lyons, France, where he died. Herodias voluntarily shared his exile.

Herod Philip built the Palestinian cities of Caesarea Philippi (see Mk 8, 27 n), and Julias. Philip died in 34 A.D. after a peaceful reign.

Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great, acquired Philip's kingdom in 37 A.D. from the emperor Gaius. Agrippa also acquired the kingdom of Herod Antipas when the latter was exiled.

After the assassination of Gaius in 41 A.D., the emperor Claudius rewarded Agrippa for his support in acquiring the throne by giving him Idumea, Judea (no longer ruled by a Roman procurator), and Samaria. Hence, from 41 till 44 A.D., the year of his death, Agrippa I was the only Herod who ever ruled a territory coextensive with that of the former Herod the Great. The territory included Agrippa's own kingdom (i.e.,

the section northeast of Galilee combined with Galilee and Perea) and the kingdom that Archelaus had inherited after the death of his father, Herod the Great.

Agrippa observed all the laws of the Jews in Palestine but he followed Greek customs outside of Palestine. In what is now Beirut, Lebanon, he built a theater and in Caesarea and Sebaste he erected statues. The death of Agrippa I is recorded in Acts 12, 21-23.

His son, Agrippa II, became king at about 50 A.D. He received the right to appoint the high priest. The king lived largely like a Jew. This is the Agrippa before whom Paul was tried (Acts 26). Agrippa II died in 100 A.D.

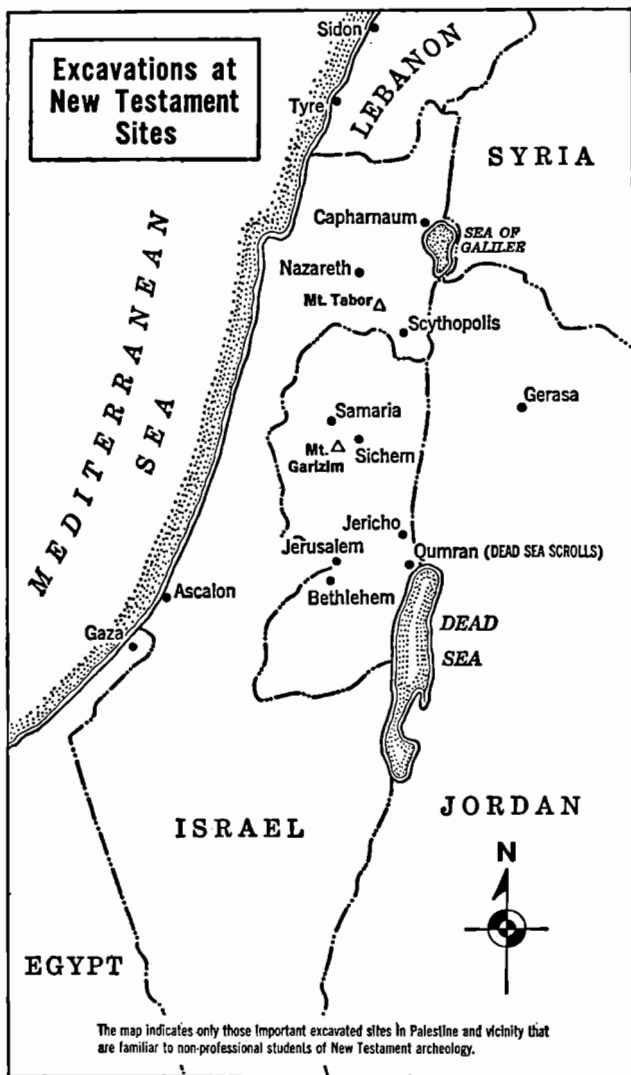
After the death of Agrippa I in 44 A.D., all Palestine was ruled by Roman procurators of the equestrian order who were directly answerable to the emperor. The occupying Romans despised the peculiarities of the Jews and spent little time trying to understand them. The Jews in turn, according to a strict logic as they saw it, regarded themselves as the Chosen People, superior to all Gentiles.

It was Roman policy to grant self-government to the lands subjected to the emperor. For the Jews this meant self-rule through the Sanhedrin, their supreme doctrinal, judicial, and administrative body which was presided over by the high priest. The Jews were autonomous in their temple cult, private cult, synagogue worship, and in the study of the Mosaic Law. They could levy a tax on all Jews living in and outside of Palestine, payable to the temple treasury (Mt 17, 23-26). They were even exempt from Caesar worship.

Since Rome reserved to herself the military defense of Palestine, small garrisons dotted the country. There were 700 to 1,000 men at the barracks of the Antonia in Jerusalem to handle disorders such as the commotion at St. Paul's arrest (Acts 21, 31ff). The "Roman" soldiers were recruited from non-Jews, principally those living in the districts of Samaria and Caesarea. The fortress at Caesarea was the official residence of the procurator and it was there that most of the troops were stationed (Acts 10).

Rome kept a vigilant eye on the Jewish procedures of taxing and on the administration of justice, but reserved to herself the right to confirm death sentences (see the explanation following Jn 19, 16 n), and to suspend the Sanhedrin. Rome was adamant in only one thing: that the Jews acknowledge her sovereignty. The manner agreed upon was a daily sacrifice for the emperor in the temple. The suspension of this sacrifice in 66 A.D. was practically a declaration of war against Rome.

Excavations at New Testament Sites



The map indicates only those important excavated sites in Palestine and vicinity that are familiar to non-professional students of New Testament archeology.

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Common to the different sects were the institutions of temple worship and education through the scriptures.

After the Bible it was the temple of Jerusalem that constituted the strongest force of uniting all Jews in and outside of Palestine. From the time of Jesus till the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the temple had reached its apex of prosperity. Never before had it enjoyed so much wealth and fame. The total number of temple priests throughout the land were 7,000. They were assisted by 11,000 Levites.

The primary purpose of the temple was the offering of sacrifice. Of the many kinds the most important was the burnt offering for the purpose of the community's atonement. This sacrifice was offered every morning and afternoon (3:00 P.M., according to Acts 3, 1). Hymns of praise, prayers, and the reading of the Ten Commandments accompanied this "continual offering" (known in Hebrew as the "tamid-offering"). The priestly blessing concluded the ceremony. On Sabbaths and feast days there were other offerings made besides the burnt offerings. Many of the faithful of Jerusalem attended the two daily sacrifices regularly. If they could not attend they stopped in prayer even on the street corner (see Mt 6, 6 n) or wherever they happened to be—much like a modern Arab interrupts his activity to pray, facing Mecca, when the town crier announces the hour of prayer.

Palestine was divided into twenty-four sections. Each section had to take its two-week turn to assist at the sacrifice through its priests. Therefore the priests were divided into twenty-four "courses" (groups). "Zachary, of the course of Abia" (Lk 1, 5) belonged to the eighth group. Priests alternated two weeks at a time to serve at the Jerusalem temple. Lay deputies, throughout Palestine, represented their section at the time appointed for taking part in the sacrifice. This practice reminds moderns of perpetual Eucharistic adoration.

Among other kinds of sacrifices were votive offerings before going on a difficult journey; a thanksgiving offering after a safe return; offerings in fulfillment of a vow (Acts 18, 18-22). The major feasts were The Day of Atonement, the Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost), the Feast of Tabernacles.

Another common institutional practice was the education of the Jews through their scriptures. The Jews were scripturally educated in the home, the school, and the synagogue. From

early childhood the children were taught the sacred scriptures by their parents, as is exemplified by Timothy (2 Tm 3, 15). Jewish boys took a pledge at the age of thirteen to keep the commandments. The Book of Leviticus was their "primer." It is unclear to what extent the boys were obliged to attend Bible schools in Jesus' time, but Bible school attendance was not obligatory for girls at all. A school room was usually attached to the synagogue.

In the synagogue was the "ark," the place where the Bible rolls were kept. Worship was held in the synagogue each Saturday (Sabbath) in the morning and afternoon, and on Sundays and Wednesdays. The service itself comprised an act of faith, a prayer, a reading from the Bible, a sermon, and a blessing. The reading from the Bible consisted of two parts; one was a section from the Pentateuch (according to a three-year cycle), the other a random passage from the "prophets." By "prophets" are here meant Josue, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 3 and 4 Kings, Isaia, Jeremia, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets. In order that the people could understand what the reader was reading from the classical Hebrew Bible, another person translated the passages into the Aramaic dialect. Outside of Palestine no translator was necessary since the Greek Bible was read. A typical sermon of the time is preserved in Heb 11 where a virtue (faith) is explained through a chain of recollections from parts of the Bible. The overall purpose of the sermon was to move the will.

It was the duty of the "ruler of the synagogue" to appoint lay readers and preachers (Acts 13, 15), and to maintain order. The assistant of the ruler had the duty of taking the scroll from, and returning it to, the "ark." (Lk 4, 20.)

Many other institutions that existed and formed parts of the religious background are explained in the annotations. Here we shall limit ourselves to a consideration of the religious sects: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Samaritans, Zealots, and Herodians.

The most famous sect was that of the Pharisees. They probably originated in the second century B.C. from the Chasidim (Hasideans or Assideans). The Chasidim fought at the side of the Machabees (see 1 Mc 2, 42 n) for the strict observance of the Mosaic Law. The Pharisees, more interested in religion than in politics, acted as the chief spiritual leaders of the people from 76-67 B.C. Some of the Pharisees were scribes, i.e., copyists and experts of the Mosaic Law. The scribes of the Pharisees were more influential than those of the Sadducees and of other sects. It was the task of the scribe to

apply the Mosaic Law of the Pentateuch to any problem. He advised the legal expert in court proceedings, the priests in the cult, and the layman in any situation. Yet the scribe was not a professional. He had, like Paul, to follow a trade (see Acts 18, 3). A scribe would train his pupil informally. There were no academies for scribes.

The Pharisees were zealous in preserving the Mosaic Law and in adapting it to the needs of the day. Excessive zeal led to particularism (see Introduction to Jona) and complacency in knowledge of the Law. Perhaps the greatest error caused by such excessive zeal was the belief that observance of the Law merited a person's justification and salvation. Opposed to that belief was the teaching of Christ. See James 2, 24 n.

Within the ranks of the Pharisees there were at the end of the first century B.C. two famous schools. One school was headed by the conservative Rabbi Shammai, the other by the more liberal Rabbi Hillel. The influence of both rabbis is occasionally felt in the Gospels (see Mt 19, 3 n). After the political dissolution of the nation resulting from the two unsuccessful revolts against Rome in 70 and 135 A.D., the Pharisees preserved Jewish law, literature, and customs. The survival of Jewish culture in present-day Judaism is in large measure due to the endeavor of the Pharisees.

The Sadducees originated in the second century B.C. This sect, more interested in politics than in religion, rivaled with the Pharisees in influencing Palestinian life. The power of both rivals was neutralized by Herod the Great. During the reign of the Roman procurators in Palestine from 44 A.D. onward, the Sadducees sided with the Romans. The sect ceased to be of any consequence when the Jews lost political independence after 70 A.D. It had never gained significant influence over the people.

The Sadducees were priests, usually wealthy aristocrats who lived in the country; the Pharisees were laymen who generally lived in urban centers. The Pharisees believed in angels and the resurrection of the dead; the Sadducees denied both (Acts 23, 8) along with divine Providence. The Pharisees added many laudable interpretations and precepts to the Mosaic Law and dignified them as "the traditions of the fathers." Unfortunately, the emphasis on these traditions became at times more important than the Mosaic Law (see Mt 15, 1-7 n). The Sadducees rejected these accretions. Moreover, they seem to have accepted only the Pentateuch as their Bible, and not the prophets and other writings. The Pharisees were more lenient in court pronouncements than the Sadducees. This tendency derived from the fear of sinning; thus, they dreaded to make pro-

nouncements and left the decision to God. Gamaliel, a Pharisee, objected to the Sadducees' proposal to execute the apostles (Acts 5, 38f) because of this fear of making a wrong judgment. There also were many minor differences between the two rivals on matters of law and liturgy, e.g., the method of reckoning the dates of the new moon and of Pentecost. (Scholars agree that even though the "Sadocites" mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls were priests, they were not the same priests as the Sadducees.)

The Essenes ranked in importance with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. This fact was brought to light by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Pharisees numbered 6,000; the Essenes numbered 4,000, although only 200 lived in their most important center, Qumran, on the northwest coast of the Dead Sea. They also lived in cities and villages of Palestine. To become a member of this ascetic group, it was necessary for the candidate to undergo a one-year "postulancy" and a three-year "novitiate." Afterward he took solemn oaths to be reverent toward God and just toward men, to hate sinners, to help the just, obey his Essene rulers, tell the truth, share his property, and to keep secret the teachings of the sect. The excavations at Qumran, of the community refectory and pool underscore the importance of common meals and ritual baths.

The Qumran community left a large library. It was preserved in jars. No matter how striking the similarities between these unearthed writings and the New Testament are, essential differences do exist. The widely accepted view among Christians and non-Christians is that the New Testament writers depended not on the Qumran writers but that both drew on the common fund of Palestinian customs and expressions.

Here are some of the radical differences between the two groups: the Essenes taught hatred of enemies; Jesus taught love of enemies. The Essenes refrained from proselytizing; the early Christians preached the Gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles. The Essene leader, "the teacher of righteousness," was persecuted; Jesus died and arose from the dead.

The Samaritans began their feud with the Jews in the eighth century B.C., and it was still raging at the time of Jesus (see Esd 4, 3 n). In spite of the Jewish claim that the Samaritan blood had become impure by intermarriage with foreigners (4 Kgs 17, 24-41), pure Israelite blood ran through the veins of many Samaritans.

The contemporaries of Jesus regarded the Samaritans as apostates (Jn 8, 48). The Samaritans believed that the Pentateuch alone constituted the Bible. Their temple, built at the end

of the fourth century B.C., graced sacred Mount Garizim (Jn 4, 20). The Jews destroyed the temple in 128 B.C. as an illegal rival of their own temple at Jerusalem. One of the notorious incidents, still fresh in the minds of Jews at the time of Christ, is recounted by Josephus: at the midnight hour during a passover (between 6 to 9 A.D.) the Samaritans desecrated the temple of Jerusalem by strewing dead men's bones on the temple floor. It may have been the influence of Hellenism that had debased the official Samaritan religion as exemplified in Simon the magician (Acts 8, 9ff). The few surviving Samaritans continue to celebrate the annual paschal sacrifice on Mount Garizim.

According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, the point in history of the Zealots' origin was the census ordered by Caesar Augustus at the time of the birth of Jesus. The census was an irritating reminder to the Jews, among other peoples, that they were living in a land occupied by Roman overlords, and an hypersensitive group formed in hot indignation the sect of the Zealots.

The Zealots agreed with the Pharisees that the will of God was to be done unconditionally. God's will was that the people should be ruled by him, and not by any human ruler. Obedience to God's will would hasten his intervention in the Messianic age. The break with the Pharisees, however, came when the Zealots declared open war against the ruling Herods and later against the Romans. Moreover, the Zealots were determined to stamp out the Greek language from Palestine. These die-hard nationalists refused to pay taxes to Rome. With the dagger, their favorite weapon of assassination, they cut down any Jew or Gentile who hindered their plans. The fanatical Zealots foolishly urged resistance against the Romans and were thereby largely responsible for the fall of Jerusalem in 66-70 A.D., and for the political dissolution of the Jewish state. Many preferred martyrdom to calling Caesar "lord." They were finally annihilated in 135 A.D.

The Herodians were another party mentioned in the Gospels (Mt 22, 16) as opponents of Jesus. Scholars generally agree that the Herodians were courtiers and followers of Herod and his dynasty, but there is a dispute on their further identification. The Herodians were more a political party than a religious sect. They settled chiefly in Galilee and among Jerusalem families. Similar to the Pharisees, the Herodians sided with the occupying Romans out of political expediency. It is not clear why Luke, completely, and Matthew, partially, avoided mentioning the Herodians by name.

INTRODUCTORY LITERARY FACTS ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT WORKS

Name	Author	Date	Place of Writing	Recipients	Purpose
Gospel of Matthew	Matthew	70?	unknown	Jewish Christians of Palestine or Syria	To show that Jesus is the Messiah
Gospel of Mark	Mark	64-70	Rome	Gentile Christians outside of Palestine	To show that Jesus is the Son of God
Gospel of Luke	Luke	80-85	Alexandria? Rome? Greece?	Gentile Christians	To give a more extensive account of Christ's words and deeds
Gospel of John	John the Apostle? John's disciple?	96-100	Ephesus	(Unidentified) Christians	To show that Jesus is the divine Messiah
Acts	Luke	64-80's	Rome	Gentile Christians	To narrate the first thirty or forty years of Church history
Romans	Paul	58	Corinth	Jewish and Gentile Christians	To discuss the justice and love of God
1 Corinthians	Paul	57	Ephesus	Mostly Gentile Christians	To answer some questions
2 Corinthians	Paul	57	Macedonia	Mostly Gentile Christians	To defend his ministry against his critics
Galatians	Paul	56-57	Corinth? Ephesus?	Gentile or Jewish Christians	To defend his apostolic authority against Judaizers

INTRODUCTORY LITERARY FACTS ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT WORKS (continued)

Name	Author	Date	Place of Writing	Recipients	Purpose
Ephesians	Paul's disciple-secretary?	61-63	Rome? Caesarea? Ephesus?	Gentile Christians	To combat in part, religious syncretism
Philippians	Paul	56-57? 61-63	Ephesus? Rome?	Mostly Gentile Christians	To encourage and to admonish
Colossians	Paul	61-63	Rome? Caesarea? Ephesus	Mostly Gentile Christians	To combat false teachers
1 Thessalonians	Paul	52	Corinth	More Gentile than Jewish Christians	To answer some questions about the end of the world
2 Thessalonians	Pseudonymous author?	52	Corinth	More Gentile than Jewish Christians	To clarify some misunderstandings
Pastoral Epistles (1, 2 Tm, Ti)	Paul's secretary? Pseudonymous author?	63-67? 90-120?	Rome	Timothy at Ephesus and Titus at Crete	To show how Church leaders must govern
Philemon	Paul	61-63	Rome? Caesarea? Ephesus?	Philemon of Colossae	To request the welcoming back of a runaway slave
Hebrews	Paul's disciple? Apollonius?	64-67? 78-90?	Italy	Jewish Christians	To encourage persecuted Christians by the doctrine of Christ's priesthood

INTRODUCTORY LITERARY FACTS ABOUT NEW TESTAMENT WORKS (continued)

16

Name	Author	Date	Place of Writing	Recipients	Purpose
James	James the Less? James' secretary?	40's? 60's? 70-150?	unknown	Jewish Christians	To deliver various admonitions
1 Peter	Silvanus?	64	Rome	Communities in present-day Turkey	To warn against false teachers
2 Peter	Peter? Peter's disciple? Pseudonymous author?	64-67? 80? 90-95? Second Century?	Rome	Communities in present-day Turkey	To warn against false teachers
1 John	John the Apostle? John's disciple?	early 90's	unknown	Christians of the entire Church	To combat false doctrines
2 and 3 John	John the Apostle? John's disciple?	90's	unknown	Church(es) in present-day Turkey (2 Jn) Gaius (3 Jn)	To combat false doctrines (2 Jn) To praise Gaius and reprimand Diotrephes (3 Jn)
Jude	A "brother" of Jesus	64-80	unknown	Some Communities in Syria?	To combat false doctrines
Apocalypse	John the Apostle? John's disciple?	90's	Patmos?	Christians of the entire Church	To encourage Christians facing persecution by the Roman emperors

The works are listed above according to their traditional sequence in the Bible.

For a fuller explanation consult the introduction to each work.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

When the reader places the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke side by side according to parallel passages, he will notice their "similar appearance." Hence the name "synoptic Gospels," derived from the Greek "syn" (common or similar) and "opsis" (view). Of the many similarities and differences the reader will detect, for example, that Matthew's "Our Father" has seven petitions; Luke's has five. Mark and Luke speak of one man possessed by the devil at Gadara; Matthew speaks of two men. Matthew and Luke describe the same three temptations of our Lord but in different sequences.

Naturally, the reader will begin to ask himself: who copied from whom, and to what extent? Did the evangelists copy from one another at all? Or did they copy from one or several documents that are unknown to us? What did these hypothetical documents contain—accounts on deeds of Jesus or sayings of his, or both? All these questions may be grouped under the heading: "the synoptic problem."

Among the theories advanced to solve the synoptic problem was the oral theory. The most telling objection to this theory, which held that all three Gospels depended on a common oral source, was that even the famed retentive oriental memory could not account for some remarkable striking similarities, both in the details and in the sequences of many Gospel passages. A written document theory would explain those similarities more satisfactorily.

From 1860 to 1960 the two-source theory was dominant. According to it, the similarities and differences of the first three Gospels could be explained thus: Matthew and Luke used Mark's Gospel (practically as we have it today) and a now lost collection of *logia* (sayings of our Lord) which the scholars referred to as Q (from the German word, *Quelle*, meaning "source"). Matthew and Luke were allegedly composed, apart from their narratives of the infancy of Jesus, by combining and editing in different ways the material found in Mark and Q. As the decades of the twentieth century cascaded, various modified forms of the two-source theory succeeded one another.

Today's critics generally advance two theories toward a solution of the problem. The first is still a modified two-source theory; the other is some form of a triple-tradition based on the supposition that the three synoptic writers depended on Matthew

or on a Greek translation of Matthew's Aramaic "Gospel." (See the beginning of the Introduction to the Gospel of St. Matthew.) From all the foregoing it is clear that there has never been a completely satisfactory solution to the synoptic problem, nor is there any on the horizon. The endeavor to solve the synoptic problem has reached a stalemate. However, here are the conclusions agreed upon by most scholars. 1. The three Gospels are not composed from a common oral tradition. 2. Both Luke and Matthew copied partly from Mark. 3. Matthew and Luke may have copied from each other, but there is no definite proof for it.

FORM CRITICISM

Simultaneously with the birth of New Testament form criticism in 1919 occurred the strong sprouting of the synoptic problem. The form critics gradually saw the limitations of source criticism of the synoptic Gospels and began to fix their gaze on the thirty-year period prior to the writing of the synoptic Gospels. This oral or preliterate period spanned the time from Christ's death to the first appearance in written form of the synoptic Gospels in the sixties.

Form critics are so called because among other tasks undertaken by them is the task of classifying the Gospels' various literary forms. Hence, the name FORM criticism, or appreciation of the literary FORMS. Based on their study of those literary forms, the critics try to explain how the Gospels came to be written as we now have them.

Of the manifold tasks that comprise the form critical method the most practical to consider in reading our annotations to the Gospels is the task of searching out the *Sitz im Leben*, as the German scholars say, or the "life situation" of the early Church from which the literary form sprang. To find out what life situation determined the literary form of this or that passage is to get the answer to the question: what definite historical social circumstances in the early Church caused this passage to be written? Some form critics claim that preaching was the situation in life that gave the impetus to the synoptic Gospels as we have them today; others say that the Gospels resulted from controversies in the early Church, or that the Gospels simply took shape in the early Christian assemblies where individual Christians instructed and strengthened fellow members. As for the Passion narratives, there are those critics who claim that they came into being through the liturgy. Finally there are

those who maintain that the Gospels originated not from any one of these circumstances but from all of them together.

One salient truth, however, which the form critics have underscored is the important and vigorous life stream of oral tradition. Before the first books of the New Testament were written, the Church already existed and was governed by the traditions transmitted orally by the apostles and Church leaders. The form critics' scientific study of this oral period has put this outstanding truth on a more scholarly basis by pointing out the intense activity of preaching, discussing, instructing, and liturgical and pastoral service. On April 21, 1964, the Biblical Commission recognized the value of form criticism and officially approved the correct use of it.

As a result of all the insights gleaned from the studies of the synoptic problem and through the method of form criticism, scholars commonly speak of three different Gospel levels.

First, there is the level of the "life situation of the early Church." This life situation is explained above as one of the tasks of form criticism. The second part of the parable of the sower is an appropriate example of this level (see Mt 13, 18-22 n).

Another level is the "situation in the Gospel." This refers to the manner and purpose of the evangelist in arranging his Gospel the way he did from the oral and written sources he used. This level is also called "redactional history," i.e., the history of Gospel composition. An illustration in point is Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount. Many talks given by Jesus at different times (as Luke seems to testify) are here combined by Matthew, because it is his custom to put similar things together, perhaps as an aid to the memory and as a pedagogical device (see Mt 5-7 n). Yet, a passage of scripture is not said to be on the first or second level unless evidence is offered. Such evidence will usually be based on different vocabulary, different points of view, deliberate changing as shown by parallel passages, and other divergences that may have been detected.

A third level is the "situation in the life of Jesus." This is the historical level—the actual words and deeds of our Lord. Do the Gospels represent this level? Hardly. Mark perhaps has more eyewitness accounts than the other evangelists, but even these are few. We very rarely have the exact words of Jesus because he spoke in Aramaic, and the Greek used in the Gospels is always a translation of his words. The scholars prefer to say that we have the substance of Christ's words and deeds. They can say this because what the attempts to solve

the synoptic problem and the method of form criticism have shown is, at least, that the sacred authors never intended to write a "Life" or biography of Christ in our modern sense of these terms. Had they intended to do so, we would know the exact words and deeds of Christ. Can the scholars show convincingly that the evangelists never did intend to write a strict Life of Christ? They believe they can.

For the sake of clarity, let us consider the task of a modern biographer. What would he have to know to compose a biography of George Washington? The biographer would have to have at his disposal objective sources from which to select, e.g., an accurate chronological account of the events in the life of Washington, and an equally accurate geographical record of his travels. Furthermore, records of everything significant that the first president said and wrote would be necessary. In other words, if the biographer were not able to say when and where Washington did and said certain things, he could not write a modern biography. In addition, the biographer would have to know something about Washington's psychological development, his philosophy, the origin and growth of his ideas on politics, government, war, religion, and so on. Every document or eyewitness evidence bearing significance on any event in Washington's life would be an invaluable aid to the biographer.

What do we find in the Gospels by way of representing a scientific "Life" of Christ? Precious little. The expressions denoting time ("in those days," "at that time," "immediately") are in most instances vague and transitional formulas. The time of Christ's public ministry seems, according to the synoptics, to be about one year. Yet, according to John's Gospel, it seems to have lasted three years. Regarding the lack of precision in dating events, the Gospel writers did not deem it necessary to even state the exact date of the birth and death of Jesus. To say that he was born "in the days of king Herod" and that he died "in the reign of Pontius Pilate" was considered accurate enough for historians in those days.

The obscure expressions used for time find their counterparts in the hazy expressions for place ("on the way," "in a house"). Only a comparatively small number of passages tell us where the events actually happened. Matthew's intent to be incomplete is obvious when we reflect that Jesus performed many miracles in Corozain and Bethsaida (Mt 11, 21), and yet the whole New Testament does not locate a single miracle in those towns. Moreover, the evangelists do not trace the topography of Christ's itineraries. Scholars today find the tracing

of them impossible. Nevertheless the Gospels present a framework of the life of Jesus which is substantially historical. After John the Baptist's imprisonment, Jesus commenced and expanded a well-received ministry in Galilee. After the people's enthusiasm waned, Jesus retired to present-day Lebanon and the Decapolis on the east side of the Jordan River. He gradually instructed his apostles and revealed to them that he was the Messiah. Finally he traveled to Jerusalem through Perea to suffer and die.

What, then, did the evangelists intend to write? The Gospels themselves answer this question. The sacred writers' principal preoccupation was to pen the "good news" of the resurrection of Christ. To explain this truth, they had to lead up to Christ's death by narrating only *some* of his controversies, miracles, and talks, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist. The scanty telling of the deeds and words of Christ sufficed to give an idea of his personality, teaching, and life, and to highlight his resurrection in proper perspective. There is also scant reflection on the development of Christ's teaching, except for Matthew who himself gives but a little.

Since the evangelists did not write a strict Life of Jesus and since modern historians have practically no other source for the story of his life except the Gospels, neither group can be credited for having presented a "Life" of Christ in the strict sense. In other words, the evangelists have given us in their accounts the "substance," the genuine central thought of Christ's words and deeds. The next question is: how do modern scholars prove that the "substance" is genuine? How do they prove that what the synoptic Gospels relate about Jesus is actually true? (We omit John's Gospel here, even though all that we shall say about the historicity of the synoptic Gospels applies to it too. See the Introduction to the Gospel of St. John for a more complete explanation of its historicity.)

To give a clearer picture of the present-day position of Gospel studies on the question of historicity, we shall first look at how the long-standing apologetic method treats of it. Then we shall present a sketch of the recent apologetic method proposed by modern Catholic biblical scholars.

The long-standing method of proving the historicity of the synoptics may be briefly summarized as follows: the Gospels come from Mark, who was Peter's interpreter, and ultimately from other eyewitnesses. These witnesses and the evangelists are trustworthy. We know this because the evangelists were sincere—they died for what they wrote. They were well informed about Christ, about the geography of Palestine, the social customs of

the people, their civil and political institutions, their religious beliefs and mentality. Much of the Gospel writings is in agreement with archeological evidence and literary evidence from contemporary writers, as Josephus and Philo. If the evangelists are trustworthy in regard to the many details that have been verified, they can also be esteemed trustworthy in regard to their reports about the claims that Christ made and which he supported with his miracles and his resurrection. Hence, the Gospels are historical.

The recent apologetic method does not reject the long-standing method but offers several modifications. One of them pertains to the *type* of history in the Gospels. The long-standing method supposes that the evangelists narrate *eye-witness* accounts of Christ's deeds and *verbatim* reports of his words. Thus, what the long-standing method supposes is equivalent to a strict, factual, modern type of history in the Gospels. To put it differently: the long-standing method uses the same tools in testing the historicity of the Gospels that it would use to test the historicity in Toynbee's *A Study of History*. It is, however, common knowledge that this modern writing of history began only in the nineteenth century.

According to modern biblical experts, the type of history as written by the evangelists is a looser type of history. It is less precise in quoting what people said, and Gospel history is also not precise in the recording of details as dates, names of places and of persons. When Mark (in 10, 46ff), for example, writes that our Lord cured one blind man at Jericho and Matthew (in 20, 29ff) says two blind men, these scholars explain any such variation of details as a very normal characteristic of orally transmitted stories. They explain that the Christian community considered minor divergences negligible since there was agreement on essentials—the actual cure of the blind person(s). The moderns teach that what is inspired is what the sacred writers meant, and in these instances they meant to vouch for the main point of the story and not for the accuracy of details. The explanation advocated by the modern scholars reveals what type of history they see and defend in the Gospels—a kind of remembered image or a painting of what Christ did. By contrast, the long-standing method tries to harmonize, for example, the divergent details in the story of the blind man at Jericho. The long-standing solution is that these are two different incidents. This explanation reveals the type of history defended thereby: a stenographer's report, or a photographic account of what Christ did.

According to the moderns, the type of history written by

the evangelists is not only a less statistical and less journalistic history, but it is *interpretive* history. This is not surprising, for all history is interpretive, else it is not history but a chronicle. Gospel history was written by authors who believed that Christ is God and who wrote for the same kind of believers as they themselves were. They did not write for unbelieving pagans. Even when Matthew portrays Christ as the Messiah, quoting from the Old Testament as often as he can in order to prove that Christ fulfilled the prophecies made therein, the evangelist is still writing for believers. It is clear that the evangelists have not begun with a methodical doubt and then have set out to write a primitive apologetic textbook.

Moreover, the authors of the Gospels wrote as believers under the influence of the Holy Spirit's brilliant illumination at Pentecost. From that time on they understood to a fuller extent what Jesus had been telling them all during his ministry.

Interpretive history also means that the evangelists sometimes adapted Christ's words to the needs of their own day. A relevant example is the famous divorce clause, narrated only by Matthew: "... whoever puts away his wife, *except for immorality* and marries another, commits adultery" (see Mt 19, 9 n). Some modern scholars believe that Matthew himself added "except for immorality" to the words of Jesus to meet the problem of his day when illegal and incestuous marriages were rampant. This minority opinion maintains that Matthew, in this clause, adapted Christ's words to the needs of the Church. The inclination of the evangelists to adapt Jesus' words to everyday problems is not at all strange if we recall how often we hear a preacher in the pulpit accommodate the Gospel texts to the needs of the listeners. This is what the apostles and evangelists did. One big difference between the preacher of today and the evangelist of antiquity is that the latter's adaptation was an inspired one.

It is only after having explained the particular manner of history in which the Gospels were written that the modern scholars have accepted the arguments advanced by the long-standing apologetic method to support the historicity of the Gospels. From this vantage point the following conclusions indicate the position of modern scholars. From a pure, scientific investigation, irrespective of personal religious persuasion, they conclude: 1. Jesus Christ really existed as an historical person. This one point of convergence on Jesus stems from different sacred writers who have written from different points of view as well as from different communities such as Jerusalem and Antioch. (We have not proven that our Lord is the expected

Messiah of the Old Testament, much less that he is divine.) 2. The historicity of the synoptics is proven *in general*. 3. Although it has not historically been proven that each activity and discourse of our Lord happened exactly as described, we may still entertain a legitimate "prejudice" in favor of the synoptic Gospels' historical value. 4. The evangelists wrote trustworthy history even if they did not equal the contemporary Greco-Roman historians in the technique of historiography. 5. A perfectly legitimate presumption is that the Gospels present substantially what Christ said.

We have not yet asked what the term "Gospel" means. Etymologically, it means "good tale;" factually, it means the "good news" of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Christ's death and resurrection form the heart of the four Gospels, as is evident from Peter's speeches in Acts, namely, the sermon at Pentecost (2, 14-40); his speech after curing the lame beggar (3, 12-16; 4, 8-12); his talk after his arrest (5, 29-32).

Many scholars discern in these speeches a four-point plan, according to which the "good news" was first preached. These same four points apparently formed the framework of each of the four Gospels. The points are: 1. A description, beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, of our Lord's public ministry; some of his miracles; some sermons, and controversies (only Matthew and Luke add the narrative of the infancy of Jesus as a prologue to their respective Gospels). 2. The passion and death of Jesus. 3. The resurrection of Jesus. 4. The conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth is not only the promised Messiah but that he is also divine. Another way of interpreting the four-point plan is this: since the main message of the "good news" was the resurrection of Christ, the evangelists had to say what led up to it, namely, his passion and death. To explain in turn what led up to his Passion, they had to explain some of his miracles, sermons, and disputes with the Pharisees who finally succeeded in having Jesus executed.

Before the Gospels of the evangelists were written there were, at first, only fragmentary accounts of the good news of salvation. Later many authors composed writings that were called Gospels of Jesus. Finally the four inspired Gospels emerged and were accepted by the Church as inspired. "The Gospel according to . . ." means: according to the viewpoint of the evangelist for each of the four Gospels.

It was only in the second century A.D. that the Greek word for Gospel was used to mean a book of recounting the words and deeds of Jesus. By way of parenthesis: the four titles, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew," ". . . Mark,"

"... Luke," and "... John" were not originally part of the inspired text.

MIRACLES

Disputes resulting from recent studies make a brief sketch on the miracles imperative. The trend of long standing has been to read the miracles as narrated in the Gospels from an apologetic point of view. It has been emphasized that the miracles of Jesus surpassed the laws of nature and thereby confirmed his claims to be the divine Messiah. Modern scholars do not deny the merits of the apologetic viewpoint. Moreover, they do not deny that the miracles of Jesus led many of his contemporaries to believe in him, nor that Jesus wrought his miracles to confirm his claims. However, these scholars deny that the apologetic aim was the first and foremost motive of our Lord's miracles. There are even many instances of Christ's refusal to prove his claims by performing miracles. He refused to do so when the chief priests and scribes blasphemed: "Let the Messiah . . . come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe" (Mk 15, 32; see also Mk 8, 12).

Taking first the synoptic Gospels and then St. John's Gospel we shall consider the principal intent underlying Christ's miracles and the evangelists' principal purpose in recording them.

The main reason for Jesus to perform miracles was to proclaim through them the arrival of the Messiah and his kingdom. He fortified this proclamation through warfare against Satan and his kingdom. Jesus intended his miracles as attacks against Satan. Beginning with the temptation of Christ, and ending with Calvary, all was a series of battles between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan who had held men imprisoned under his rule of sin since the fall of the first parents till the arrival of Jesus (see Mt 12, 29 n).

The miracles themselves consisted in outright expulsions of demons from possessed persons. These exorcisms proved the arrival of the kingdom: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (see Mt 12, 28 n). A second way in which Jesus used the miracles as a weapon against Satan was by healing the sick. Since, in the popular mind, sickness was a result of sin and sick people were thus considered part of Satan's kingdom, the miracles of curing and healing performed by Jesus were aimed as blows against the kingdom of Satan. The miraculous cure of the paralytic was, in the eyes of the people, illustrative of Christ's power over illness, sin and therefore over Satan (see Mt 9, 3-7 n). A third manner of using his miracles against Satan was through the

raising of the dead. Since the connection between sin and death was close, death was just as easily considered to fall under Satan's dominion as was sin. St. Paul illuminates this in saying: "the sting of death is sin . . . thanks be to God who has given us the *victory* through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15, 56f). By the miracle of raising people from the dead, Jesus showed his triumph over Satan (e.g., the widow's son, Lk 7, 14). Yet, the greatest triumph over Satan's dominion of the dead was through the miracle of the resurrection on Easter morn. Now Jesus was proclaimed Messia and Lord (see Acts 2, 33 n). Some experts propose a fourth manner used by Christ in working miracles against Satan—the nature miracles. However, the scriptural texts sampled do not seem to prove the theory advanced by these experts.

Besides proclaiming the arrival of his kingdom through a three-pronged attack against Satan's kingdom, Jesus also performed his miracles in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. He told the disciples of John the Baptist that the arrival of his kingdom has been manifested by his miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead to life (see Mt 11, 4-5 n). Finally, Jesus sometimes performed a miracle with the principal intention of teaching a truth in symbolical terms (see Lk 5, 10 n; Mk 11, 14 n). More generally, however, the symbolic meaning is secondary (see Mt 8, 10-11 n).

Turning from the synoptic Gospels to John's Gospel it becomes clear that John does not present the miracles of Christ as an announcement of the arrival of his kingdom but only as acts belonging to the ministry of Jesus and as an illustration of God's power. John's Gospel does not underscore the warfare between Satan's kingdom and the kingdom of Christ. Another great difference is this: in the synoptic Gospels the symbolism of the miracles is secondary; in John's Gospel the symbolism is primary (see the section on the historical value in the Introduction to the Gospel of St. John).

CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE

More recent in biblical studies than the problem of the miracles is the intricate problem of Christ's knowledge. A long-standing opinion in the Church teaches that, besides having divine knowledge, Jesus possessed three kinds of human knowledge: *acquired* knowledge, which he learned through experience just as any other man would; *infused* knowledge, granted to his human intelligence without learning from experience; *beatific* knowledge, giving Jesus the ability to see

the essence of God and know everything in him. (Beatific vision includes the constant experience of intense joy permeating the whole being.)

The modern trend among Catholic scripture scholars and theologians is to look at the Gospels themselves for a study of Christ's knowledge and awareness of who he was. A basic outline of how some scholars view this question follows.

At the age of twelve Jesus shows that he is fully aware of being divine. He tells his parents who found him in the temple: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (see Lk 2, 49 n). The boy Jesus did not gradually become aware that he was God's divine Son, he always knew it. He knew it as a child, then as a youth, and later as an adult. In other words, Jesus was aware of his divinity through his human intelligence. This awareness took hold in him in much the same way that we become aware of ourselves. Moreover, Christ's understanding of himself developed along the same lines that our understanding of self develops.

Besides his self-awareness of being divine, Jesus learned through his human knowledge just as other boys learned. He was not just pretending to learn, he did learn when Joseph taught him carpentry and Mary his daily chores. In the words of Luke, "Jesus advanced in *wisdom* and age and grace before God and men" (Lk 2, 52). This verse may be easily understood to mean that as the knowledge he acquired from experience advanced, so did his human awareness of his divinity "advance."

During his public ministry Jesus continued to show his awareness of being divine. His actions also made it clear. Some outstanding examples among his claims, miracles, and prophecies are: his claim to have the power to forgive sins (see Mt 9, 3-7 n); his claim to be master of nature (see Mk 8, 24 n); his claim to be master of the Sabbath (see Mt 12, 8 n). All these claims, which he made to show that he is divine, were understood by and made through his human intelligence. This intuitive self-knowledge did not include the "beatific vision." According to the Gospels, this "state of glory," i.e., the *constant* experience of perfect joy permeating the whole being, was not enjoyed by Jesus until after his resurrection. The transfiguration was an exception. Consequently, during his agony in the garden, in the Passion, and on the cross he did not enjoy the beatific vision (see Mt 26, 37-39 n).

A further perusal of the Gospels shows that in addition to being humanly aware of his divine sonship, Jesus knew things which he never learned through human experience. Some examples are: his ability to read the thoughts of others such as

those of Judas (Lk 22, 21), and of the Samaritan woman (see Jn 4, 16-18 n). He knew of the death of Lazarus before he was told (see Jn 11, 4a n); he knew what happened to Nathaniel under the fig tree (see Jn 1, 49 n); he knew when and where he was to suffer, die, and arise from the dead (see Mt 20, 17-19); he knew and taught religious doctrine *perfectly*. All the foregoing examples are instances of infused knowledge, i.e., knowledge given to his human intelligence without learning from experience. Jesus, though, always acknowledged God as the source of his knowledge: "as the Father has told me." The element common to all these examples of infused knowledge is the help they gave to Christ in his mission of redemption (see Mt 24, 36 n). By the same token, Christ did not have infused knowledge of what we call today modern sciences. His thirty years at Nazareth give no indication of exceptional knowledge and talents. He did not even impress his own relatives and villagers. Why not? Because he did not, in all probability, possess this kind of infused knowledge, for in the divine plan it was not necessary or helpful to Christ's ministry of redemption to know about factual sciences as mathematics, or the ideas of brilliant philosophies.

Since the Gospels present Jesus as one who learned the ordinary things as other people of his village did, it seems likely that as he grew up in a definite historical and cultural setting, he also acquired the same strange ideas prevalent in his environment such as judging people to be possessed by the devil when they may have been beset by diseases. (For a probable case of epilepsy, see Mt 17, 17 n.) Instead of explaining that in such cases Christ adapted himself to the ignorance of the Jews—as the long-standing opinion explains—it seems more in conformity with the Gospel story to say that he used current concepts to express religious teachings to his contemporaries.

To summarize the foregoing observations: Christ was always intuitively conscious of being God's divine Son, but he also had infused knowledge of some things besides the knowledge which he acquired from experience. In line with the considerations proposed by modern Catholic theologians, e.g., J. Galot, K. Rahner, Christ is more truly like men in everything (Heb 2, 7) except sin. These scholars are acutely aware of the danger involved in emphasizing the infused and acquired knowledge of Jesus to the detriment of his divine knowledge, or of underscoring his humanity to the detriment of his divinity. They are also very sensitive to the difficulty adherent to the application of their general observations to each and every particular text in the Gospels.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

The name of Matthew probably means "gift of God." The evangelist's name is found in the lists of the apostles in the four Gospels and in Acts, but he seems to have had two Jewish names, Matthew and Levi. He is "Matthew the publican" (Mt 10, 3) or the tax collector (Mt 9, 9), and he is "Levi, the son of Alphaeus" who honored Jesus with a banquet after our Lord chose him as an apostle (Mk 2, 13ff; Lk 5, 28ff). Matthew who plied his trade at Capharnaum in Galilee, was employed by Herod Antipas and not by the Romans. His employment may indicate that he had a better education than his apostolic co-workers, the fishermen-apostles.

Protestant biblical scholars generally deny that Matthew the apostle is the same person as Levi the publican. This dispute about identity is on a literary, not on a doctrinal level.

Passing from the man to the book: did Matthew write another Gospel before he wrote the Greek Gospel associated with him, which we now read in the New Testament? Catholic scholars concurrently answer yes; Protestants, no. The reason for this divergence lies in the different interpretation of a statement made by Papias, bishop of Hieropolis (in modern Turkey) around 135 A.D. The statement has been preserved by Eusebius, the Church historian who died about 340. It reads: "Matthew collected the words in the Hebrew language but everyone interpreted them, as well as he could." Catholic scholars understand that "the words" mean a miniature Gospel of Matthew in Aramaic (almost all agree that Hebrew here means Aramaic) which everyone interpreted or translated as well as he could. Protestants see several meanings in the statement quoted above. One meaning is: Matthew collected sixty passages from "Scripture," i.e., the Old Testament, but everyone translated his quotations as well as he could or interpreted them (thought out for himself) as well as he could how they were fulfilled. Another meaning offered by the Protestants is: to his collection of sixty passages Matthew himself attached brief narratives of the episodes in which the Old Testament passages were fulfilled, and each reader translated these Aramaic accounts into his own vernacular as well as he could. Although this academic and literary, but not doctrinal dispute remains, both Catholics and Protestants interpret, in practice, the same Greek New Testament text.

There is more agreement on the audience to which the Gospel was addressed. The first Gospel is directed to Christians converted from among the Jews. That these Jewish Christians were the object

of the evangelist's words is apparent, for instance, from the fact that Jewish customs are presumed known. Contrast the complaint of the Pharisees and scribes in Mt 15, 2: "For they (the disciples of Jesus) do not wash their hands when they take food" with Mk 7, 1-4 where the Jewish custom of washing is explained at length.

The purpose of the writing of the first Gospel is seen in the dominating theological theme that it expounded to the Jewish Christians: Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. Matthew's Gospel, more than any other Gospel, sets out to show that Jesus is the Messiah. He came to establish his kingdom. Small wonder that Matthew's work is often called: The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. Furthermore, Matthew's portrait of our Savior is that of a Rabbi, a teacher of God's Law (23, 8). The mosaics in Byzantine basilicas are perhaps the best representations in art of Matthew's picture of Christ.

To know for certain where the first Gospel was composed and where these Jewish Christians dwelled whom the evangelist addressed is impossible. Such an audience could have been in Palestine and in Syria where numerous Jewish Christians lived. The attempt to be more precise by pointing to Jerusalem or Antioch in Syria still ends only in an hypothesis.

It is disputed whether the Gospel was written before or after 70 A.D. The main but not exclusive reason for advocating that it dates from after 70 A.D. is found in the interpretation of the parable of the marriage feast. In this parable the king sends his army to burn the city of those who killed his servants (Mt 22, 7). If the city is interpreted to be Jerusalem, which the Romans destroyed in 70 A.D., then the Gospel was written after that date. See Mt 22, 6-7 n.

As the division of the Gospel at the end of this introduction indicates, the evangelist composed his story of Jesus in five narratives and five discourses, each composition comprising distinct events and sayings related by similarity of topic. The stereotyped phrase that ends each of the five discourses, "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words . . .," is an indication of the deliberate arrangement into discourses. Chapter 18 of the Gospel is a clear example of this. These sayings are frequently gathered in clusters of three, five and seven.

It is not surprising then that the evangelist freely transposes the deeds and words of Jesus from their original into different historical times and places. Besides, he often condenses accounts, sometimes even to the point of obscurity, so that recourse must be made to a parallel passage. See Mt 9, 2 n.

The first Gospel influenced the early Church and Christian literature of the second century more than any other book in the New Testament. St. Matthew's was the most read and most quoted Gospel. It was used for instruction in Christian morality. Neophytes read this Gospel not only as scripture but as a manual of membership in the Church. There were several reasons for its

popularity; foremost was its completeness. Matthew had all of Mark's narratives plus the narrative of the infancy of Jesus. Moreover, the first evangelist answered the needs of the Church members of his day. His clear divisions made for easy reading and memorizing. His narratives and discourses, with their pleasant style, have ever lent themselves to preaching and teaching.

The popularity of Matthew's Gospel endures even in our times. In the Gospels of Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are each used twenty-four times. In the American Book of Common Prayer (1924 edition) pericopes (selective passages for the various Church seasons) from the first Gospel are more frequent than those of the other Gospels.

Main divisions of the Gospel of St. Matthew are:

1. Prologue: The Account of the Infancy, 1—2
2. First Narrative: Some Facts which Set the Stage for the First Discourse: the Ministry of John the Baptist; the Temptation; Jesus in Galilee, 3—4
3. First Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount: the Manifesto of the Kingdom, 5—7
4. Second Narrative: Nine Miracles, 8—9
5. Second Discourse: Jesus Instructs the Apostles, 10
6. Third Narrative: John the Baptist; the Impenitent Towns; the Opposition to the Kingdom, 11—12
7. Third Discourse: The Mysterious Nature of the Kingdom Explained through the Parables, 13
8. Fourth Narrative: Jesus Trains His Disciples, 14—17
9. Fourth Discourse: Jesus' Lessons to the Disciples, 18
10. Fifth Narrative: More Hostility toward Jesus, 19—23
11. Fifth Discourse: The End of Jerusalem and of the World, 24—25
12. Epilogue: Passion, Death, and Resurrection, 26—28

PRELUDE

THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR

1

- 1** *Genealogy of Jesus* The Book of the origin of Jesus Christ,
2 the Son of David, the son of Abraham. | Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot Judas and his brethren.
3 Judas begot Phares and Zara of Thamar, Phares begot Esron,
4 Esron begot Aram. | And Aram begot Aminadab, Aminadab
5 begot Naasson, Naasson begot Salmon. | Salmon begot Booz of Rahab. Booz begot Obed of Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, Jesse begot David the king.
6 And David the king begot Solomon of the former wife of
-

1, 1-17: This genealogy is incomplete, and so is the one in Lk 3, 23-38 because the number of names is insufficient to cover the amount of years represented by the generations. Sometimes the names escalate from son to grandfather, or to great-grandfather, or the like. Even though the historical value of the two genealogies cannot be proven, it is possible (since many families kept genealogies) that the ancestors of Jesus had handed down a Davidic genealogy.

Some of the differences in the two genealogical lists are: 1. Mt gives forty-one names; Lk gives seventy-six. (In both lists seventeen names are identical.) 2. Mt's genealogy descends from Abraham to Jesus; Lk's genealogy ascends from Jesus to Adam. 3. Peculiar to Lk's genealogy are names from Abraham to Adam. 4. From Abraham to David the names in both lists are almost identical but the remaining names from David to Joseph, except for Zorobabel and Salathiel, differ notably.

Since both lists are genealogies of Jesus, why do they differ so much? One common explanation is that Mt lists the kings of the Davidic dynasty to suit the dignity of Jesus, the Messiah. Lk lists the supposed true ancestors of Joseph. For another common explanation see 1, 16 n.

1, 1: The ambiguous title in the Greek may refer to the genealogy or to the whole Gospel. *Jesus*: our Lord's name comes from the Hebrew and Aramaic "Jeshua" which means "Yahweh is salvation," or "Jesus saves." Jesus was a common name in both Old and New Testament times.

1, 3-6: The general source of the names is 1 Par 2, 1-15.

1, 3: *Thamar*: see Gn 38, 19 n. Since it is unusual to find women in genealogies of Jews, why did the evangelist mention Rahab, Ruth (v. 5) and "the former wife of Urias" (v. 6)? There is no satisfactory answer. One scholarly guess is that, since all four women were foreigners, Mt wanted to say that Jesus came to save non-Jews also.

1, 5: *Rahab*: see Jos 2, 9-11 n on her conversion. *Ruth*: see the Moabitess in the book of Ruth.

1, 6: *Wife of Urias*: an allusion to David's adultery in 2 Sm 11, 1-27.

- 7 Urias. | Solomon begot Roboam, Roboam begot Abia, Abia
 8 begot Asa. | And Asa begot Josaphat, Josaphat begot Joram,
 9 Joram begot Ozias. | And Ozias begot Joatham, Joatham
 10 begot Achaz, Achaz begot Ezechias. | And Ezechias begot
 11 Manasses, Manasses begot Amon, Amon begot Josias. | And
 Josias begot Jechonias and his brethren at the time of the
 carrying away to Babylon.
- 12 And after the carrying away to Babylon Jechonias begot
 13 Salathiel, Salathiel begot Zorobabel. And Zorobabel begot
 14 Abiud, Abiud begot Eliachim, Eliachim begot Azor. And Azor
 15 begot Sadoc, Sadoc begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud. And
 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, Matthan begot
 16 Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, and
 of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.
- 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are four-
 teen generations; and from David to the carrying away to
 Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away
 to Babylon to Christ fourteen generations.
- 18 *The Virgin Birth* Now the origin of Christ was in this
 wise. When Mary his mother had been betrothed to Joseph,
 before they came together, she was found to be with child by

1, 7-11: The general source of the names is 1 Par 3, 10-16.

1, 12: *Jechonias . . . Salathiel . . . Zorobabel*: the source of these three names is 1 Par 3, 17-19.

1, 13-15: The names in these verses are not found anywhere else in the Bible.

1, 16: There are many different readings of this verse in the Greek manuscripts. *Jacob begot Joseph*: there is no satisfactory answer to explain the discrepancy between this text which makes Jacob the father of Joseph, and Lk 3, 23 which makes Heli the father of Joseph, except perhaps to postulate that one of them was Joseph's stepfather. See 1, 1-17 n.

1, 17: Mt artificially divided his genealogical list into three groups of fourteen generations each, thereby dividing the history of the nation into three periods: the patriarchal (Abraham to David), the royal (Solomon to Jechonias and the exile), the postexilic (Salathiel to Jesus). It is often proposed to count from Jechonias to Jesus inclusively in order to find fourteen generations in the third period.

The most common scholarly guess as to why Mt chose fourteen is that this number is the total numerical value of the three consonants that David's name contains in Hebrew. Consequently, the symbolic meaning seems to be that Jesus is David threefold, i.e., he most certainly descended from David.

1, 18-2, 23: For centuries the majority interpreted the infancy of Jesus historically. According to many recent scholars, this passage is an haggadic midrash, that is, a meditation, usually on a part of scripture. Each of the five episodes in this passage has an explicit text for meditation. This is only a working definition because there

- 19 the Holy Spirit. | But Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was minded to
 20 put her away privately. | But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to thee Mary thy wife, for that which is begotten in her
 21 is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and

is no agreement on the nature of a midrash, except to say that it is not a fable. The midrashic interpreters also have different opinions regarding the part of scripture on which Mt was meditating. Some say it was the birth and childhood of Moses as known from scripture (see 2, 20 n for the only instance), but especially from extrabiblical Jewish legends, principally in their oral stage. When an haggadic midrash treats of an apparently historical event, e.g., the origin of Jesus, then the midrash most likely contains an historical nucleus which, however, is amplified with legendary embroidery. Modern readers almost instantly ask: what is historical and what is embroidery? Since the midrashic writer did not make this clear-cut distinction, scholars can only surmise. See Lk 2, 52 n.

1, 18: *Before they came together*: to live. *To be with child by the Holy Spirit*: what greatly differentiates the New Testament story of the virgin birth from alleged parallel stories in Hellenistic religion and mythology is that the parallels always speak of a woman having intercourse with a divine being. Mt and Lk 1, 35 attribute the pregnancy of Mary to a miracle of the Holy Spirit. (See 13, 55-56 n.)

For the Jews of the period in question, infidelity during a virgin's customary one year's engagement was practically regarded as adultery. A bill of separation was needed to break off the engagement. See v. 19 where Joseph is called "her husband" and v. 20 where Mary is called "wife."

1, 19ff: The classical difficulty is: did Joseph know that Mary had conceived of the Holy Spirit? The long-standing majority view, in general, is: Joseph did not know it. He noticed Mary's pregnancy. He did not ask Mary how this took place. Mary did not explain. Joseph's problem was how to dismiss Mary without humiliating her publicly.

A modern minority opinion, independent of the midrashic opinion (see 1, 18-2, 23 n), suggests that before they came together Joseph learned from Mary of the Holy Spirit's activity. Joseph therefore thought that God did not want him to marry her. Since Joseph was a just man, he had decided to dismiss Mary privately. At this point he received divine assurance of what he already knew from Mary: that her condition was due to the Holy Spirit. (Being told of what he already knew constitutes the main weakness of this minority opinion.) Joseph is directed to continue his course of action by taking Mary as his wife (v. 20). He obeys (v. 24).

1, 20: The midrashic interpreters suggest that the angels and the dreams in chs. 1-2 are an externalized dramatic way of expressing God's Providence after the manner of similar Old Testament examples. (See Gn 31, 11-13 n.) Whether the angels appeared or not, the supernatural event and message remain the same. The historical nucleus in this first episode (vv. 18-25), according to the midrashic opinion, is the virgin conception.

- thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people
 22 from their sins." Now all this came to pass that what was
 spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled. |
 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth
 a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel"; which is
 interpreted, "God with us."
 24 So Joseph, arising from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord
 25 had commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he
 did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn son.
 And he called his name Jesus.

2

- ¹ *The Magi* Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of
 Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi came from
 2 the East to Jerusalem, | saying, "Where is he that is born
 king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and

1, 22-23: See Is 7, 14 n on how this text was fulfilled.

1, 25: *He did not know her*: an Hebraic expression for: he did not know her through sexual intercourse. *Till*: the Greek text insinuates nothing about relations after Christ's birth. Those who deny Mary's virginity after the birth of Jesus base their arguments not so much on this verse as on the "brethren of the Lord" (see 13, 55-56 n). *Firstborn*: the better Greek manuscripts say "son." See the explanation of firstborn son in Lk 2, 7 n. *And he called his name Jesus*: see a different tradition in Lk 1, 31 where Mary is ordered to name him Jesus.

2, 1: *Bethlehem of Judea*: this is different from Bethlehem in Zabulon (Jos 19, 15). *Magi*: Mt is using the word in its honorific meaning of wise men. The same Greek word, in the singular, is used in a derogatory sense for "sorcerer" in Acts 13, 6. Mt says nothing about the number or the color of the magi. The Latin Liturgy says there were three magi (Caspar, Melchior, Baltassar) because of the three gifts mentioned in v. 11. The notion of the magi being kings arose after biblical times through an accommodation of Ps 71, 10f and Is 60, 6, and perhaps from the suggestive kingly nature of their gifts. The relics of the magi in Cologne, Germany, are not authentic. *From the East*: the East is a general term. The gifts mentioned in v. 11 seem to point to southern Arabia.

2, 2: *Star*: those who explain the appearance of the star as an historical event try to identify the star with other astronomical events of the past, e.g., the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus and Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B.C. The year 12 B.C. when Halley's comet appeared is generally considered too late a date for Christ's birth. The midrashic interpreters are not convinced that the manner of acting of the biblical star agrees with the way in which a conjunction of heavenly bodies occurs. When the historical interpreters resort to explaining a miraculous star, the midrashic interpreters reply that the miraculous event does not tally with the air of secrecy weaving around the star's travel from Jerusalem to Bethlehem (vv. 2-9), unless another miracle is invoked, namely, that only the magi saw

- 3 have come to worship him." But when King Herod heard this
 4 he was troubled, and so was all Jerusalem with him. | And
 gathering together all the chief priests and Scribes of the peo-
 ple, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born
 5 And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it
 6 is written by the prophet, 'And thou, Bethlehem, of the land
 of Juda, art by no means least among the princes of Juda:
 for from thee shall come forth a leader who shall rule my
 people Israel.'"
 7 Then Herod summoned the Magi secretly, and carefully
 ascertained from them the time when the star had appeared
 8 to them. | And sending them to Bethlehem, he said, "Go and
 make careful inquiry concerning the child, and when you
 have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and
 worship him."
 9 Now they, having heard the king, went their way. And
 behold, the star that they had seen in the East went before
 them, until it came and stood over the place where the
 10 child was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced ex-
 11 ceedingly. | And entering the house, they found the child
 with Mary his mother, and falling down they worshipped
 him. And opening their treasures they offered him gifts of
 12 gold, frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream
 not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country
 by another way.

the star. The atmosphere of secrecy bespeaks a legendary frill.
 See 2, 7-12 n.

2, 4-6: *Bethlehem . . . by no means least*: Michea 5, 1 calls Bethlehem "small" politically and territorially: Mt calls it "by no means least" because of its connection with the Messiah. If Jesus had not been born in Bethlehem, he would still have fulfilled the prophecy of Michea. See Mi 5, 1 n.

2, 4: *Chief priests and Scribes*: the Sanhedrin.

2, 7-12: Because of the improbabilities stated in 2, 2 n the midrashic interpreters believe that the coming of the magi and the star are legendary amplifications. Moreover, it seems out of character for Herod to carelessly allow the magi to escape. Again, is not the sudden appearance and disappearance of the star strange? Since legendary amplifications are often due to a reflection on some part of scripture, some of the midrashic interpreters propose that the biblical source of the star is Nm 24, 17 "a star shall advance from Jacob." For Mt the star would symbolize the Davidic Messiah's birth.

2, 11: *Gold, frankincense and myrrh*: the disputed symbolic meanings attached to these gifts stem from spiritual writers after New Testament times.

2, 12: Whether the magi episode is historical or midrashic, its religious message is the same. One way of explaining the message is: Christ's own people did not recognize him, but the pagan magi did.

- 13 *The Flight into Egypt*** But when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there until I tell thee. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him." So he arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod; that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."
- 16 *The Innocents*** Then Herod, seeing that he had been tricked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry; and he sent and slew all the boys in Bethlehem and all its neighborhood who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had carefully ascertained from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremias the prophet, "A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more."
- 19 *The Return to Nazareth*** But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." So he arose and took the child and his mother, and went into the land of Israel. But hearing that

2, 13-15: The historical interpreters try to identify the exact spot of the flight "into Egypt," beginning with the Palestinian-Egyptian border to Cairo and farther south. See Os 11, 1 n. The midrashic interpreters suggest that this flight is legendary.

2, 16-18: The slaughter of the innocents is alluded to in *Henry V*, III, 2.

2, 16: The historical interpreters estimate from Bethlehem's population and mortality rate that a total of about twenty boys was slain. (The midrashic interpreters cast doubt on the historical event of this slaughter.) *Two years . . . according to the time: the star appeared to the magi for the first time about two years previously.*

2, 18: See Jer 31, 15 n. *Rama*: six miles north of Jerusalem. Rachel's grave was believed to be in Bethlehem (Gn 35, 19). This link with Bethlehem may be another reason why Mt quotes Jer 31, 15.

2, 19-23: For the history of how Herod's kingdom was divided after his death see Introduction to the New Testament.

2, 20: *For those who sought the child's life are dead*: the Greek words here are identical with Ex 4, 19 in the Greek Bible. Moses is old to return from Midian: "Go and return into Egypt for they are all dead who sought your life." The midrashic interpreters who claim that Mt is paralleling the story of Jesus with that of Moses offer this as undeniable evidence. See 1, 18—2, 23 n.

Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod; he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee. And he went and settled in a town called Nazareth; that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophets, "He shall be called Nazarene."

I. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

1

3

¹ *John the Baptist* Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the desert of Judea, | and saying, "Re-

2, 23: *He shall be called a Nazarene*: there is no satisfactory explanation of Mt's meaning because this expression is not found anywhere in the Bible. A common theory is: Mt says that Jesus by going to Nazareth "fulfilled" the prophecy that he would suffer and be despised because "Nazarene" was used as a term of reproach among the Jews. Regardless of the explanation, the main thrust is that God directed the Holy Family to live at Nazareth according to his plans. *Nazareth*: this village is never mentioned in the Old Testament. See Jn 1, 46. The central area of modern Nazareth is the site of the New Testament Nazareth.

3, 1-12: See Mk 1, 1-8; Lk 3, 1-18 for parallels.

3, 1: *Now in those days*: no exact time is meant by this transitional phrase characteristic of the Gospels. *The desert of Judea*: a phrase to designate the area southeast of Jerusalem. In scriptural language a desert may mean a place used for pasturage but not for agriculture. It is not a sandy wasteland.

3, 2: *Repent*: the people of Qumran, of Dead Sea Scroll fame, practiced baptism and urged interior repentance, but the distinctive feature of John the Baptist's repentance is not mortification for past sins, though this is not excluded, but "a change of mind" to make a person ready for any sacrifice that the forthcoming Messiah will ask. Therefore, the Baptist preached not only to hardened sinners but to all classes of people. See Lk 3, 12-14.

The best opinion to date is that the Baptist did not borrow his type of baptism from the people of Qumran but he and they formed part of a general baptist movement. The Baptist may have known the Qumranites, but there is only a possibility that he was once a member of their sect. *Kingdom of heaven*: the translation is misleading. In most passages the translation of "Kingdom" should be dominion or rule. "Heaven" is a circumlocution for God. Mt followed the Jewish custom in respectfully substituting "heaven(s)" for God because of his Jewish Christian readers. The rest of the New Testament uses "kingdom of God." Consequently "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" means that the dominion of God is being offered to the well disposed. Moreover, the phrase "to enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 20, 1) does not mean to arrive in a localized place in heaven, but to come under the dominion of God where

- 3 pent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, when he said, "The voice of one crying in the desert: 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'"
- 4 But John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts
5 and wild honey. Then there went out to him Jerusalem, and
6 all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan; and they were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.
- 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! who has shown you how to flee from the wrath to come?
8.9| Bring forth therefore fruit befitting repentance, and do not think to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that God is able out of these stones
10 to raise up children to Abraham. For even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that is not bringing forth good fruit is to be cut down and thrown into

he rules as king of men's hearts and where his will is carried out in love. (See Mk 10, 15 n on a double use of "kingdom of God.") The dominion of God forms the central message of the first three Gospels.

3, 3: Of all the evangelists John alone puts these words of Isaiah on the lips of John the Baptist. See Is 40, 3-5 n. The text of Isaiah influenced the people of Qumran in their life of prayer and study.

3, 4: The Baptist probably dressed purposely like Elias or, according to a conjecture, the evangelist in describing John as being so dressed means to say that John was another Elias. See 4 Kgs 1, 8. *Garment*: mantle. *Girdle*: loin cloth. *Locusts*: they are still eaten by the Bedouin. *Wild honey*: from bees or shrubs. The Baptist most probably ate other things also, but Mt wants to illustrate the austere life the Baptist led.

3, 6: *Baptized*: baptisms to prepare the people for the imminent arrival of the Messiah (see 3, 2 n). *Confessing their sins*: not sacramental confession.

3, 7: The Baptist knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees did not come to be baptized by him but to observe him critically. The rhetorical question in v. 7 means that they will not escape the Messiah's condemnation unless they change their ways. *Pharisees and Sadducees*: in Lk 3, 7-9 the Baptist addresses the same words to the crowds. Perhaps Mt inserted the words "Pharisees and Sadducees" because vv. 11-12 are addressed to the crowds.

3, 9: Do not think that you have no need of repentance simply because you are descended from Abraham. God can just as easily make stones descend from Abraham (a hyperbole to stress the gratuity of this racial honor).

3, 10: The time for repentance has come ("the axe . . . the trees"). If you do not repent you will be punished. *Fire*: this does not mean hell fire; it is a metaphor for punishment.

- 11 the fire. I indeed baptize you with water, for repentance. But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to bear. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor, and will gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire."
- 13 *The Baptism of Jesus* Then Jesus came from Galilee to John, at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. And John was for hindering him, and said, "It is I who ought to be baptized by thee, and dost thou come to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Let it be so now, for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice." Then he permitted him. | And when Jesus had been baptized, he immediately came up from the water. And behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit

3, 11-12: The Baptist now addresses the crowds. He baptized either by pouring water over the head and shoulder of the penitent or by immersion (by leading the penitent into the water from the feet to the waist). *I will baptize . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*: here and in the parallel passages these words are ascribed to the Baptist; in Acts 1, 5 to Jesus. The Baptist, however, is not thinking of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost nor of Christ's dispensing the sacrament of baptism, but of Christ's sending the Spirit with the "fire" of judgment for all men at the end of the world which he most probably thought to be imminent.

3, 12: *Winnowing fan*: a shovel used to toss grain into the air to allow the chaff to blow away. The Baptist is portrayed as a thunderous Old Testament prophet. *Unquenchable fire*: some scholars believe that his "fire" means the fire of judgment as the two previous ones; others interpret fire here as an allusion to the ever burning Gehenna, even though the Greek word is "pur" not "geenna." See 5, 30 n.

3, 13-17: See par in Mk 1, 9-11; Lk 3, 21f; Jn 1, 32-34. Some form critics have good reasons to believe that the oldest account is Mk's and that he probably received it from Jesus or from the Baptist. Mt and Lk depend on Mk's account.

3, 13: *At the Jordan*: Christ was baptized on the Jerusalem side or western bank of the Jordan between Jericho and the mouth of the Dead Sea. According to a tradition that goes back to the third century, the exact spot is five miles north of the Dead Sea. It is commemorated by an Orthodox monastery.

3, 14-15: Some Catholic form critics believe that the evangelist in his final edition added these verses to his original account to combat doctrinal difficulties such as: that the Baptist was superior to Jesus; and that Christ was baptized like any other sinner. Hence, the expression "to fulfill all justice" would have been inserted to explain what the real reason for Christ's baptism was, namely: the carrying out of God's plan.

3, 16-17: There are several discrepancies in the accounts of the evangelists. In Mt's narrative, for example, the voice seems to address

17 of God descending as a dove and coming upon him. And behold, a voice from the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

4

1 The Temptation Then Jesus was led into the desert by the

the bystanders. "This is my beloved Son" whereas in Mk's account the voice addresses Jesus: "You are my beloved Son." The majority opinion is that all the bystanders could have witnessed the same event, but it is related from Christ's point of view in Mk, from the bystanders' point of view in Mt and Lk, and from the Baptist's viewpoint in Jn 1, 32-34. However, because of other discrepancies (see parallel passages), it is disputed whether the voice was objectively audible and the dove objectively visible. But those who deny the objective reality of these phenomena do not necessarily deny the historicity of Christ's baptism by John. They merely say that the voice and the dove are external means to dramatically express the inner experience of Jesus which he later made known.

3, 17: As to the theological meaning of the whole baptismal scene, especially v. 17, the suffering servant interpretation seems to be the most popular, at least among modern Catholics. They interpret the saying of the first three evangelists, "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased," as a reference to the suffering servant praised in Is 42, 1. They also understand the expressions "lamb of God" and "Son of God" in the baptismal account of Jn 1, 29-34 to refer to the suffering servant of Isaia. According to this interpretation, the voice of the Father addresses Christ and calls Christ to fulfill for the people the ministry of the suffering servant. This means that Christ is baptized in view of his death on Calvary by which all men will be granted forgiveness of their sins.

When the Christian readers read these Gospels after and in the light of Pentecost, they definitely understood the intent of the evangelists. They wanted their readers to grasp that the "voice" meant that Christ was divine. The readers also understood the Trinity: in the voice, God the Father; in the dove, the Holy Spirit; and in Christ, the Son.

4, 1-11: See par Mk 1, 12-13; Lk 4, 1-13. Among Catholic scholars the opinion was recently adopted that the temptations were written as an externalization of Christ's true inner experience which he made known after the event. (Similar temptations of pre-Christian Buddha are not considered to have influenced the biblical narrative, nor to have cast doubt on the genuineness of Christ's temptations.) Whether the temptations were interior or not, Satan did not know that Christ was divine.

The meaning of these temptations, as expounded by the fathers of the Church, is: they signify the temptations of the flesh, pride, and the world. To many moderns the meaning is Messianic or typological. The Messianic meaning is: Christ was tempted to be a temporal and political Messiah. The typological meaning is this: the Chosen People (the type) succumbed when they were tempted; Christ, the new Chosen People (antitype) triumphed over temptation.

- 2 Spirit, to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty
 3 days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came
 and said to him, "If thou art the Son of God, command
 4 that these stones become loaves of bread." | But he answered
 and said, "It is written, 'Not by bread alone does man live, but
 by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"
 5 Then the devil took him into the holy city and set him
 6 on the pinnacle of the temple, | and said to him, "If thou
 art the Son of God, throw thyself down; for it is written,
 'He will give his angels charge concerning thee; and upon
 their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot
 7 against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written further,
 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"
 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and
 showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory
 9 of them, and he said to him, "All these things will I give
 10 thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Then Jesus
 said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'The Lord
 thy God shalt thou worship and him only shalt thou serve.'"
 11 Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came and
 ministered to him.

2

- 12 *Jesus in Capharnaum* Now when he heard that John had
 13 been delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving
 the town of Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capharnaum,
 which is by the sea, in the territory of Zabulon and
 14 Nephthalim; that what was spoken through Isaias the prophet

4, 2: Although forty is usually a round number, commentators often interpret it literally here because Lk 4, 2 insists on it.

4, 4: Man should not be guided by exterior signs only, but by unconditional confidence in God's word. See Dt 8, 3 n.

4, 5: *The pinnacle of the temple*: the southeast corner of the temple wall was about 351 feet above the valley of Cedron.

4, 6: A quote from Ps 90, 11f, originally said of the just man.

4, 7: A quote from Dt 6, 16 which refers to the people tempting God at Massa as related in Ex 17, 1-7.

4, 8: Since the fifth century, Mount Qarantal, a few miles north-west of Jericho, has been assumed to be the traditional site of this temptation.

4, 10: See Dt 6, 13.

4, 11: Those who hold that the temptations were written as an externalization of Christ's inner experience (see 4, 1-11 n) would generally interpret the angels symbolically.

4, 12-17: See par Mk 1, 14f; Lk 4, 14 and 31.

4, 12: On the occasion of the Baptist's arrest (Mt 14, 3-12) Jesus departed from Judea.

15 might be fulfilled: | "Land of Zabulon and land of Nephtalim, by the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of
 16 the Gentiles: | The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, a light has arisen."

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

18 ***The First Disciples Called*** As he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea (for they
 19 were fishermen). | And he said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And at once they left
 20 the nets, and followed him. And going farther on, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their
 22 nets; and he called them. And immediately they left their nets and their father, and followed him.

23 ***Mission of Preaching and Miracles*** And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every
 24 sickness among the people. And his fame spread into all Syria; and they brought to him all the sick suffering from various diseases and torments, those possessed, and lunatics, and
 25 paralytics; and he cured them. And large crowds followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

4, 15-16: Isaia speaks of the deliverance of his people suffering from the invasion of the Assyrians. Mt freely quotes Isaia and reinterprets his words as fulfilled in Christ's entrance into this northern part of Palestine. See Is 8, 23 n and 9, 1 n.

4, 17: Mt makes the same statement about the Baptist. See 3, 2 n and Mk 1, 15 n.

4, 18-22: See par Mk 1, 16-20 n; Lk 5, 1-11.

4, 18: *Peter . . . Andrew*: see Mk 1, 18 n.

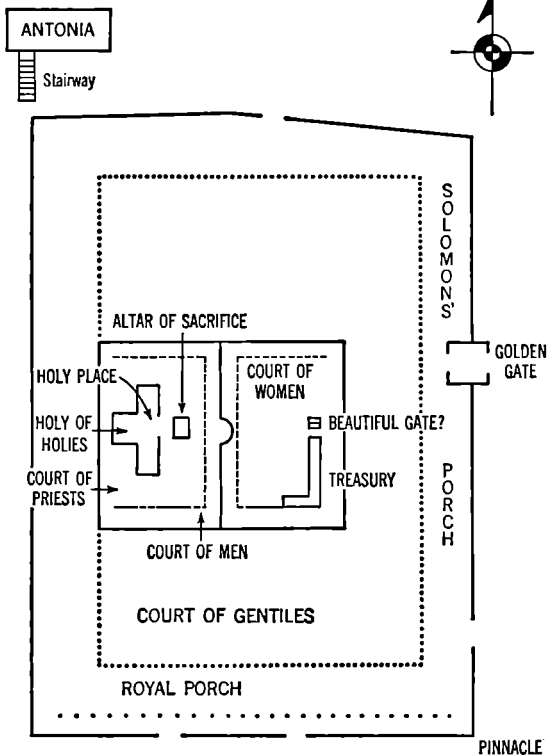
4, 19: *Fishers of men*: see Mk 1, 17 n.

4, 23-25: This summary of Jesus' activities contains elements which Mk and Lk sprinkle throughout their Gospels.

4, 23: *Teaching . . . preaching . . . healing*: the three constituents of our Lord's ministry. The evangelist stresses Christ's ministry of healing.

4, 24: *Syria*: corresponds to "all the region round about Galilee" (Mk 1, 28), not the Roman province of Syria which included all Palestine.

The Temple of Herod



THE GOLDEN GATE: Although the present outline indicates a fifth century A.D. origin of the gate, it was probably the Golden Gate through which Jesus made his triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. The name originated after Christ's time. **THE BEAUTIFUL GATE:** This gate is mentioned in Acts 3, vv. 2 and 10, but its location is not given. **THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE:** This expression does not refer to the highest spire of the temple proper but to a high point (351 feet) above the Cedron Valley (Mt 4, 5; Lk 4, 9).

The Temple of Herod

The third temple in the history of Israel was Herod's. The first was that of Solomon and the second of Zorobabel. According to the majority of archeologists there are no remains of the first two temples. The construction of Herod's temple was begun in 20 B.C. and its basic structure was completed about 18 B.C. The final completion was accomplished just before the temple's destruction in 70 A.D. (see Jn 2, 20). Herod's temple was almost entirely different from the two earlier temples. Herod, e.g., surrounded the temple with porticoes (porches). The building followed the Hellenistic-Roman style of architecture, yet it retained the Solomonic arrangement of rooms in the sanctuary. (The rooms are not indicated in the diagram.)

Since there are not many architectural remains, archeologists try to reconstruct a model of the original by relying on the references to the temple in the New Testament, parts of the writings of Josephus and of the Mishna, a codification of Jewish oral traditions. The last two writings cannot be made to agree on many details. The New Testament contains over a hundred references to Herod's temple, but only few are helpful.

Archeologists agree on the general ground plan, which comprises the Court of the Gentiles with its stairway that leads to the Court of the Women and its higher stairway leading to the Court of Men (or Court of Israel). The last mentioned court probably surrounded the sanctuary on three sides. Closest to the altar was the Court of Priests, north of the altar the shambles (the place where the animals were slaughtered) and south of the altar the laver.

3

5

1 And seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain. At
2 when he was seated, his disciples came to him. At
opening his mouth he taught them, saying:

3 *The Beatitudes* "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.

5—7: As a result of recent form criticism by J. Dupont on the Sermon, many modern scholars are accepting, with various differences the following attempted reconstruction of the original account. Originally the Sermon was introduced by an outline of Christ's Galilean ministry—Mt 4, 23-25 and the institution of the twelve apostles on the mount—Lk 6, 12-16. A clue for this theory is seen in Mk 3 where these events are narrated while the rest of the Sermon is omitted.

Luke changed the order and, to give the Sermon a universal appeal, addressed it to the crowd on the plain (see Lk 6, 17). Originally the Sermon was directed to the twelve apostles on the *mount*.

There have also been changes in the Sermon itself. Matthew seems to have *added* discourses held at other times, in other places and under different circumstances. Luke seems to have *omitted* parts that did not suit his Gentile audience and purpose, e.g., he changed the general theme of the Sermon from justice and religion to charity.

The original Sermon seems to have consisted of an Introduction (the Beatitudes) and three parts, namely: your justice must surpass that of the Pharisees, Mt 5, 20ff; the motive of justice in three examples, Mt 6, 1ff; and the warnings in Mt 7.

The Sermon is not a synthesis of Christianity nor a dissertation on morals, but a general sketch of the Christian way of life with a few examples. It seems that Jesus delivered an important talk in the early months of his public ministry because of the outstanding position given to it by Matthew and Luke.

5, 1-12: Used as the Gospel in four Masses.

5, 1: *The mountain*: though the article is given in the Greek text, many scholars do not believe that a special hill is meant; it could mean any hill around Capharnaum. Some believe that Mt is picturing Christ as the new Moses about to deliver a new law on a new Mt. Sinai. *Disciples*: not a restricted apostolic group, but everyone as 7, 28 indicates.

5, 2: *Opening his mouth*: an Hebraic expression to introduce an important message.

5, 3-12: See par Lk 6, 20-23. Some modern form critics believe that the original edition (not Christ's original discourse) contained the four beatitudes stated in vv. 3, 5, 6, 11-12.

5, 3: *In spirit*: perhaps Mt added this. The poor are not the socially poor, but the meek and resigned as explained in So 2, 3 n.

5, 4: *Meek*: the Greek word may emphasize resignation rather than the "poor" in v. 3. V. 4b expresses heaven in symbolic terms as does v. 3b.

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- 5 Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.
 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
 8 Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.
 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
 10 Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 11 Blessed are you when men reproach you, and persecute you, and, speaking falsely, say all manner of evil against you,
 12 for my sake. Rejoice and exult, because your reward is great in heaven; for so did they persecute the prophets who were before you.
- 13 *The Disciples Compared to Salt and Light* "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its strength, what shall it be salted with? It is no longer of any use but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men.
 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the measure, but upon the lamp-stand, so as to
 15 give light to all in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
-

5, 5: See Is 61, 1-2: "the Lord has anointed me . . . to comfort all who mourn."

5, 6: Happy are they who strive to act according to God's will (justice) because they will be "satisfied" with eternal life.

5, 7: *Merciful*: compassionate.

5, 8: *Clean of heart*: this expression does not mean purity but sincerity. See Ps 23, 4 n. *See God*: enjoy God intimately.

5, 9: Those who share in the Messiah's task of making peace will resemble God ("children of God").

5, 10: *Justice*: See 5, 6 n. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" repeats v. 3b to form an "inclusion," a Semitic literary figure which opens and closes a discourse in identical terms. The beatitudes end here because vv. 11-12 are merely an elaboration on v. 10.

5, 13-19: Used as the Gospel of ten Masses.

5, 13: See Mk 9, 49; Lk 14, 34f. Rather than interpret salt as the spirit of sacrifice the better interpretation is that the followers of Christ must make his teaching attractive by the example of their lives or else be despised by men.

5, 14-16: Just as light illumines so must Christ's followers illumine others through "works."

5, 14: Just as a city on a mountain top is conspicuous so must Christ's followers be conspicuous by their "works."

17 *The Old Law and the New* Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come
 18 to destroy, but to fulfill. For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall be lost from
 19 the Law till all things have been accomplished. Therefore whoever does away with one of these least commandments, and so teaches men, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever carries them out and teaches them,
 20 he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 *Against Anger* "You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not kill'; and that whoever shall kill
 22 shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be liable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'Thou fool!', shall be liable
 23 to the fire of Gehenna. Therefore, if thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has
 24 anything against thee, | leave thy gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come

5, 17: *To fulfill*: Christ came to *perfect* the Mosaic Law through his teaching. It is commonly thought that, in practice, he destroyed the Mosaic Law by replacing it with the Christian law, but in an historical sense Christ is truly saying that the Mosaic Law finds its ultimate blossoming in Christianity. St. Paul later was to explain the full implication of this question (see Galatians).

5, 18-19: The general meaning is: the Christian law must be completely observed before the world ends. It does not mean that all the prophecies must come true.

5, 18: *Amen*: truly. *One jot or one tittle*: the yod (jot) was the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. See par Lk 16, 17.

5, 21-47: Whereas Matthew compares the Christian ideals with the Jewish ideals, Luke presents the life of the Christian as one of love. *You have heard*: through the Mosaic Law and its oral interpretational laws. *But I say*: the contemporary rabbis had a similar saying but they never spoke on their own authority as Christ did.

5, 21: See Ex 20, 13. *Judgment*: local Sanhedrin.

5, 22: The meaning in general is that Jesus wants to prevent even the beginning of murder, i.e., anger. Scholars dispute the meaning of the gradation of the offenses and their punishments. It is not easy to see how the courts, which deal with legal matters, could punish anger which is not always externally manifested. The best working hypothesis is that vv. 21 and 22a constituted the original reading. Matthew then assembled here, from their contexts, the rest of v. 22 plus vv. 23-26, namely, "and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' . . ." *Raca*: although in general it means fool, its exact meaning is unknown. *Fire of Gehenna*: see 5, 30 n.

25 and offer thy gift. Come to terms with thy opponent quickly while thou art with him on the way; lest thy opponent deliver thee to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and
26 thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou wilt not come out from it until thou hast paid the last penny.

27 *Chastity of Mind and Body* "You have heard that it was said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' But
28 I say to you that anyone who so much as looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29 "So if thy right eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish than that thy whole body
30 should be thrown into hell. And if thy right hand is an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members should be lost than that thy whole body should go into hell.

31 *Divorce* "It was said, moreover, 'Whoever puts away his
32 wife, let him give her a written notice of dismissal.' But I say to you that everyone who puts away his wife, save on account of immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and he who marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery.

33 *Concerning Oaths* "Again, you have heard that it was

5, 25-26: See par Lk 12, 58f. Since it seems unlikely that this is solely a piece of crafty advice, the following allegorical interpretation is generally given: the judge represents God, and the prison symbolizes "the fire of Gehenna."

5, 27: A reference to Dt 20, 14.

5, 29-30: Compare 18, 8f and Mk 9, 41-46. These hyperbolic expressions mean that occasions of sin must be avoided. To interpret the expressions literally leads to absurdities, e.g., if the right eye is plucked out the left eye can still see.

5, 30: *Hell*: Geenna in Greek as in v. 22 refers to the valley of Hinnon where there always burned the fire of the city dump.

5, 31-32: See 19, 3-9.

5, 33-37: Jesus demands absolute honesty, and if his demands are met there is no necessity for oaths to be taken (since they ultimately originate from man's dishonesty, anyway). Yet, as the ideal demands of Jesus are never perfectly met, it must not be understood that he forbids oaths entirely (contrary to the belief of the Quakers). He himself does not refuse to take an oath before the Sanhedrin (Mt 26, 63f). Paul also took oaths often. See Rom 1, 9.

5, 33: One of several opinions traces this reference to Ex 20, 7: "You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain."

said to the ancients, 'Thou shalt not swear falsely, but
 34 fulfill thy oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you not to swear
 35 at all: neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor
 by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for
 36 it is the city of the great King. Neither do thou swear by
 thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.
 37 But let your speech be, 'Yes, yes'; 'No, no'; and whatever
 is beyond these comes from the evil one.

38 *The New Law of Talion* "You have heard that it was
 39 said, 'An eye for an eye' and, 'A tooth for a tooth.' But I say
 to you not to resist the evildoer; on the contrary, if someone
 strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;
 40 | and if anyone would go to law with thee and take thy
 41 tunic, let him take thy cloak as well; and whoever forces
 42 thee to go for one mile, go with him two. To him who
 asks thee, give; and from him who would borrow of thee,
 do not turn away.

43 *The Love of Enemies* "You have heard that it was said,
 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and shalt hate thy enemy.'
 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who
 hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate

5, 34: *At all*: Christ forbids all these varieties of oaths (vv. 34-36) since the essential part of an oath is to take it in the name of God upon whom everything somehow depends, even man's life ("head," v. 36).

5, 37: Just say "yes" or "no" without oaths (Jas 5, 12). *Evil one*: the devil or the evil condition of the world.

5, 38: See Ex 21, 23-25 n. The Romans called this the law of talion from the Latin word "talio" meaning retaliation. Its modern form is the "vendetta." In Gospel times the law of talion was most probably executed in terms of money. *Not to resist the evildoers*: Jesus is not teaching that evil must *never* be opposed. He exhorts to forgive generously, as illustrated by various examples in vv. 39-66.

5, 39: Christ spoke hyperbolically here, since he did not turn the other cheek when struck at the trial (Jn 18, 22f). See Paul's violent words in the same situation (Acts 23, 2f).

5, 40: *Tunic*: the undergarment. *Cloak*: the outer garment. This is an apt example for the poor people of that time.

5, 43-48: See par Lk 6, 27-36.

5, 43: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor*: see Lv 19, 18 n. *Shalt hate thy enemy*: this is not in Lv. The whole expression, "love thy neighbor" and "hate thy enemy" is an exaggerated way of saying: love your enemy less than your neighbor.

5, 44: There are several differences in the Greek. Read: "But now I command you, love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you that you may be true sons of your heavenly Father."

- 45 you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil, and
 46 sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even
 47 the publicans do that? And if you salute your brethren only, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do that?
 48 "You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.

6

- 1 *Purity of Intention* "Take heed not to do your good before men, in order to be seen by them; otherwise you shall have no reward with your Father in heaven.
 2 *Almsgiving* "Therefore when thou givest alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets, in order that they may be honored
 3 by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward: | But when thou givest alms, do not let thy left hand know
 4 what thy right hand is doing, so that thy alms may be given in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee.

5, 45: See an echo of "makes the sun" in *The Merchant of Venice*, III, 1.

5, 47: *Publicans*: the Greek word would be better translated throughout the New Testament as "tax collectors." See Mk 2, 15 n on the distinction between "publicans" and "tax collectors."

5, 48: This is not an exhortation to reach the perfection of God himself but to strive for the highest possible perfection of which man is capable.

6, 1-18: Christ's emphasis here is on a self-forgetful spirit, not on a multiplicity of self-forgetful acts. This self-forgetting does not only consist in curbing one's wish to impress others, but also in restraining the desire to take pride in oneself (v. 3). The positive aspect of this self-forgetful spirit is that man should act exclusively for the Father. The originality of Christ's teaching here does not lie in the idea of self-forgetful love for the Father, already found in the Old Testament, but in his (Christ's) insistence on it. This originality is all the more striking when we recall how glory was openly sought in the ancient world. Furthermore, Christ's originality is also seen here in the clarity with which he underscores hypocrisy.

6, 2: *Sound a trumpet*: this is most probably meant as a metaphor. There was a custom of sounding trumpets during public fasts.

6, 3: See 6, 1-18 n. See Lloyd C. Douglas' *The Magnificent Obsession*.

6, 4: See Epictetus' *Discourses*, I, 14.14, for a similar idea of "thy Father, who sees in secret."

- 5 Prayer** "Again, when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the street corners, in order that they may be seen by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.
- 6** But when thou prayest, go into thy room, and closing thy door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee.
- 7** "But in praying, do not multiply words, as the Gentiles do; for they think that by saying a great deal, they will be
- 8** heard. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what
- 9** you need before you ask him. In this manner therefore shall you pray:

6, 5: *Standing*: the most general posture for prayer among pagans, Jews, and the first Christians.

6, 6: Jesus is here in no way forbidding public prayer either in the temple (see 5, 24), or on the streets where the Jews prayed when they happened to be there at the time of prayer. By his hyperbole Jesus means to forbid ostentatious prayer.

6, 7: Seneca, *Epistles* 31.5, says that such people fatigue the gods.

6, 9-13: See Lk 11, 2-4 who places the Our Father outside the context of the Sermon on the Mount and in a context that most probably is more historical. Mt seems to have added the Our Father here to give a fuller account of Christ's teaching on prayer. Today's scholars generally hold that Mt's wording of the Our Father is older than that of Lk because the expressions of the first evangelist are more Semitic and fit better into the rhythm of the Aramaic language. On the other hand, these scholars hold that the number of petitions of the Our Father in Lk is closer to the Our Father spoken by our Lord, for Lk has not included the third petition (thy will be done), and the end of the sixth petition (but deliver us from evil), which may have been a liturgical addition. In their attempt at harmonization, other commentators conservatively maintain that Christ spoke the Our Father twice, once as recorded in Mt and once as given by Lk.

The common interpretation of the petitions in the Our Father is that they refer to daily needs. Since 1947 scholars have proposed an eschatological interpretation. They believe that the petitions refer to the end of the world and that this eschatological interpretation is in agreement with what the early Christians had foremost in mind when they prayed the petitions as we read them in Mt and Lk. The scholars who advocate the eschatological interpretation do so for the first three petitions, but they differ on the last three. The fourth petition is the hardest to be interpreted eschatologically. The same scholars do not believe that Christ himself meant all of these petitions eschatologically when he first uttered them. For instance, when he said, "hallowed be thy name" (v. 9) he may have alluded to his crucifixion, death and resurrection.

Since the Gospels give two forms of the Our Father, it seems that Jesus did not intend to give a fixed prayer but the spirit of a Christian prayer. However, the liturgies even in New Testament times molded it into a fixed prayer. Modern liturgies have departed from the Greek text of the Our Father, so that today it is not said in English, German, French, or even Latin in accordance with a true

- 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
 10 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.
 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'
 14 For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father
 15 will also forgive you your offenses. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses.
- 16 *Fasting* "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting. Amen I say to you, they have received their
 17 reward. But thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head and
 18 wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen fasting by men, but by thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee.
- 19 *True Riches* "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume, and where thieves
 20 break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves
 21 break in and steal. For where thy treasure is, there also will thy heart be.
 22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If thy eye be sound,
 23 thy whole body will be full of light. But if thy eye be

translation of the Greek text. Finally, while most of its phrases can be found in the Old Testament the originality or the Christian spirit of this prayer is not in the idea of God as the Father of the nation but probably in Jesus as the Son of the Father and the way for Christians to the Father. See table on the "Our Father," p. 54.

6, 10: *Kingdom*: dominion or reign would be more accurate (see 3, 2 n). *Will*: the expression does not refer only to obedience and to the ten commandments but to all of God's plans for heaven and earth.

6, 13: The recently translated Protestant Bibles correctly explain that the longer ending ("For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.") was not in the original text.

6, 16: The most important good works for the Jews, as they are for Moslems today, were almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. See Tb 12, 8: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms." *Disfigure*: there are several educated guesses at the meaning: Making long faces? Not washing?

6, 20-21: See par Lk 12, 33-34.

6, 20: See similar idea in Tb 4, 10.

6, 21: The Greek word for treasure, though plural, indicates one treasure in one place. The insinuation is that every person has one treasure. This verse has the same meaning as v. 24.

6, 22-23: See par Lk 11, 34-35.

6, 23: *But if thy eye be evil*: but if your eyesight is poor. *There-*

THE OUR FATHER

Petitions	Daily Needs Interpretation	Eschatological Interpretation
1st "hallowed be thy name."	May man glorify and regard God's person ("name") as holy.	May man glorify and regard your person as holy in the final coming at the end of the world.
2nd "Thy kingdom come"	May your dominion grow daily throughout the world.	May your final universal reign come.
3rd "thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."	May God's commands and universal plan be carried out on earth as in heaven.	May God's commands and universal plan be completed at the end of the world.
4th "Give us this day our daily bread."	Give us today our daily needs.	Give us "today," an expression of urgency, our future bread, i.e., God's final coming.
5th "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."	Forgive us our daily debts as we forgive those of others. Forgiveness here connotes a reinstatement into God's friendship, and not only a cancellation of a debt.	May God grant complete forgiveness to our brethren at the end of the world.
6th "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."	Help us in our daily temptations.	Help us in our last trial with Satan.

evil, thy whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore if the light that is in thee is darkness, how great is the darkness itself!

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Trust in God "Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life a greater thing than the food, and the body than the clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they? But which of you by being anxious about it can add to his stature a single cubit?

"And as for clothing, why are you anxious? Consider how the lilies of the field grow; they neither toil nor spin, | yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which flourishes today but tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith!

"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' | (for after all these things the Gentiles seek); for your Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these

• if the light . . . darkness itself: if blindness of the body is misdeed, how much more is blindness of the soul.

v. 24: See par Lk 16, 13. *He will stand by*: he will be devoted to. *mammon*: money.

v. 25-33: See par Lk 12, 22-31. Jesus is not replacing prudence and risk with reliance on God. By means of a hyperbole of carefree living, attacks excessive worry about material goods. The most important thing in life is the attainment of God himself (v. 33).

v. 27: *To his stature a single cubit*: a better translation is, "a day in his life."

v. 28: *Lilies of the field*: the "lilies" signified here cannot yet be identified botanically.

v. 30: *God so clothes*: the biblical notion of God as creator is stated here. God is not considered to have made the world once for all (he clothed), a Hellenistic notion, but his creation continues, "he clothes."

v. 33: *His justice*: his will is placed in apposition with his "king-

34 things shall be given you besides. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow will have anxieties of its own. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

7

1 *Avoiding Judgments* "Do not judge, that you may not be
2 judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall
3 be judged; and with what measure you measure, it shall
4 be measured to you. But why dost thou see the speck in thy
5 brother's eye, and yet dost not consider the beam in thy own
6 eye? Or how canst thou say to thy brother, 'Let me cast out the
7 speck from thy eye'; and behold, there is a beam in thy
8 own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thy
9 own eye, and then thou wilt see clearly to cast out the
10 speck from thy brother's eye.

6 "Do not give to dogs what is holy, neither cast your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you.

7 *Power of Prayer* "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and
8 you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For
9 everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to
10 him who knocks, it shall be opened. Or what man is there
among you, who, if his son asks him for a loaf, will hand
him a stone; or if he asks for a fish, will hand him a serpent?

6, 34: Similar ideas were in vogue in contemporary stories, but providence for the contemporaries was the result of philosophical reasoning. In the light of v. 33 it seems that v. 34 contains Christ's exhortation to rely on God for things beyond the powers of man.

7, 1-5: See par Lk 6, 37-42; Mk 4, 24.

7, 2b: See par Mk 4, 24b.

7, 3: The splinter ("speck") and log ("beam") comparison is acceptable in oriental humor.

7, 6: Since the connection with the preceding verses is so loose it is surprising that there is no satisfactory explanation why this saying is placed here. Regardless of this literary question, the verse sounds a warning not to preach the holy Gospel to the unworthy. Yet, Christ is not forbidding here the conversion of pagans; this would be in contradiction with 8, 11f and 28, 18. There are many parallels to this verse in ancient literature, e.g., Plato's *Timaeus*: "You cannot speak of him (God) before all people."

7, 7-11: See par Lk 11, 9-13.

7, 7: If human fathers generously yield to the persevering petitions of their children, how much more will God the Father yield!

7, 10: Bread and fish are staple foods in Palestine. The stone and serpent are probably mentioned because of their deceptive forms, similar to a loaf of bread and to a fish.

11 Therefore, if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

12 **The Golden Rule** "Therefore all that you wish men to do to you, even so do you also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 **Obstacles to Virtue** "Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who enter that way. How narrow the gate and close the way that leads to life! And few there are who find it.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and work many miracles in thy name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity!'

7, 11-23: The three isolated commands are not connected among themselves nor with the preceding verses.

7, 11: *Good things*: the counterpart in the par Lk 11, 13 is "the Holy Spirit," the pre-eminent heavenly "good thing."

7, 12: See a shorter form in par Lk 6, 31. If in Mt 22, 34-40 the two commands of love of God and neighbor summarize the Law and the Prophets (the Old Testament), the present text gives the rule for putting into practice the love of one's neighbor. The unexpressed motive is love of God. The expression "golden rule" emerged in the eighteenth century. It is generally admitted that this rule, partly negatively and partly positively, is found in the Old Testament (Tb 4, 16), in the Greco-Roman world, India, China, and in the western world. The golden rule is not the result of any borrowing; it is a common ethical principle, the origin of which cannot be traced to any particular place.

7, 13-14: The doctrine of the two ways is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

7, 13: See par Lk 13, 24.

7, 16: See par Lk 6, 43-44.

24 Conclusion of the Sermon "Everyone therefore who hears these my words and acts upon them, shall be likened
25 to a wise man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it was founded
26 on rock. And everyone who hears these my words and does not act upon them, shall be likened to a foolish man who
27 built his house on sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and was utterly ruined."

28 Epilogue And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, that the crowds were astonished at his teaching;
29 for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes and Pharisees.

8

1 A Leper Now when he had come down from the mountain,
2 great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came up and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst
3 make me clean." And stretching forth his hand Jesus touched him, saying, "I will; be thou made clean." And
4 immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See thou tell no one; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a witness to them."

7, 24-27: See par Lk 6, 47-49 n.

7, 28: *And . . . finished these words*: this stereotyped formula or its equivalent closes each of the five discourses in the first Gospel.

7, 29: Whereas the scribes and Pharisees argued from scripture and tradition, Jesus spoke on his own authority.

8, 1-11, 1: Ten miracle stories provide the framework of the Galilean ministry of Jesus when he was at the height of his popularity with the masses.

8, 1-4: See par Mk 1, 40-45; Lk 5, 12-16.

8, 2: *Leper*: "leprosy" in the Bible is a general term for various skin diseases (as in this text) not for Hansen's disease, the modern term for true leprosy. Leprosy was considered God's punishment for sin. People avoided the leper not only for fear of contracting the disease but for fear of becoming unclean (Lv 13, 45f). *Worshipped*: this word is better translated throughout the Gospel as "paid homage" even though it will not be annotated thus whenever it occurs. Paying homage consisted of a profound bow, and while returning to an erect position the common oriental greeting called for a simultaneous carrying of the right hand to the breast, mouth and forehead. "If thou wilt" does not necessarily imply that Christ was unwilling.

8, 4: *Tell no one*: the reason for this command is not clear. Did

- 5 The Centurion's Servant** Now when he had entered Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion who entreated him, | saying, "Lord, my servant is lying sick in the house, paralyzed, and is grievously afflicted." Jesus said to him, "I will come and cure him." But in answer the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man subject to authority, and have soldiers subject to me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."
- 10 And when Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to those who were following him, "Amen I say to you, I have not found such great faith in Israel. And I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom

it mean: tell no one lest too many miracle-hungry people come? Or did Christ want the temple authorities and not the cured man to announce the cure? *Show . . . Moses commanded:* "the leper" was ostracized until he was declared clean by the officiating priest. The "gift" consisted of two birds (Lv 14, 4-7). *Them:* the word expected here is "him," the priest. From several suggested meanings given for "them," one is that the gift would be a proof to Christ's critics that he complied with the Mosaic Law, or a proof to the crowds that the leper was cured.

8, 5-13: See par Lk 7, 1-10; Jn 4, 46-53. It is generally agreed that Mt and Lk recount two variants of one and the same story. See Jn 4, 46-53 n. Some differences are: in Mt the centurion speaks to Christ; in Lk the centurion speaks to Christ through intermediaries. In Lk, when the messengers returned to the house, "they found the servant in good health who had been ill" (v. 10); Mt merely says: "And the servant was healed in that hour" (v. 13).

8, 5: *A centurion:* of the Roman army.

8, 6: *Servant:* in Greek "pais," also used in vv. 8 and 13, may mean slave, servant or son. The common translation "servant" is in large measure due to the par Lk 7, 2 which says "*doulos*," the Greek word for servant or slave.

8, 8: The thoughtful centurion knew that Jews become ritually unclean by entering the houses of pagans. The verse has become the Communion formula at daily Mass.

8, 9: *Servant:* in Greek, the word "*doulos*" is used here. See 8, 6 n.

8, 10-11: There are very few Gospel passages which mention Christ's admitting the Gentiles into the Church. Perhaps this is why some scholars hold that the secondary motive which Jesus had in performing this miracle was to teach symbolically the conversion of the Gentiles. See 10, 5 n.

8, 11-12: These verses are treated differently in Lk 13, 28-29.

8, 11: Before the time of Christ, the Messianic joys were illustrated through the banquet image (Is 25, 6). The same image became a symbol of heavenly joy as in this text.

12 of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be put forth into the darkness outside; there will be the weeping, 13 and the gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." And the servant was healed in that hour.

14 *Peter's Mother-in-law* And when Jesus had come into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed, sick 15 with a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she rose and began to wait on them.

16 *Other Miracles* Now when it was evening, they brought to him many who were possessed, and he cast out the spirits 17 with a word, and cured all who were sick; that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who said, "He himself took up our infirmities, and bore the burden of our ills."

18 *Sacrifice to Follow Christ* But when Jesus saw great 19 crowds about him, he gave orders to go across the sea. Then a Scribe came and said to him, "Master, I will follow thee 20 wherever thou goest." But Jesus said to him, "The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son 21 of Man has nowhere to lay his head." And another, who was one of his disciples, said to him, "Lord, let me first go

8, 12: *Darkness*: borrowed from the description of sheol, "darkness" here contrasts with the light within the banquet hall. *Weeping . . . gnashing of teeth*: in themselves these terms are stereotyped characteristics of deep agony, but in this context they refer to the agony of the damned. The verse is an allusion to the rejection of the Chosen People.

8, 14-15: See par Mk 1, 29-31 n; Lk 4, 38-39.

8, 14: *Fever*: scholars have been unsuccessful in trying to specify the type of illness meant here by the Greek words.

8, 16-17: See par Mk 1, 32-34; Lk 4, 40-41.

8, 17: In Is 53, 4 the suffering servant takes on the sufferings of others, i.e., the punishment of their sins, but Mt here interprets Christ's fulfillment of the Isaian Hebrew text insofar as our Lord eliminated physical ills and cases of diabolical possession. Therefore, according to some experts, Mt is accommodating the Isaian text.

8, 18-22: See par Lk 9, 57-60.

8, 18: *Sea*: the eastern side of the lake of Galilee.

8, 19: *A Scribe*: Mt gives the scribes a more important role in his Gospel than the other evangelists.

8, 20: A similar comparison is found in the recently discovered apocryphal Gospel of St. Thomas. It is only a possibility that this was originally a popular pessimistic saying about man in general, but in Mt it alludes to aloofness from material security as part of the road to

22 and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

23 *The Storm on the Lake* Then he got into a boat, and his
24 disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm
on the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves; but
25 he was asleep. So they came and woke him, saying, "Lord,
26 save us! we are perishing!" But he said to them, "Why are
you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then he arose and re-
buked the wind and the sea, and there came a great calm.

Calvary. The interpretation of aloofness is better than the farfetched one that the foxes allude to the Herodians and the birds to the Gentiles meaning that everyone is well situated in Israel except its true king, the Son of Man. *Son of Man*: although found twenty-five times in Mt it is the first time in this Gospel that Jesus styles himself thus. The expression means "man" (see Ez 2, 1 n). It is commonly taught that the Son of Man was not a usual Messianic title at the time of Christ. Besides, many experts hold that Jesus took the expression from the mysterious heavenly Son of Man in Daniel (see Dn 7, 16-18 n) as a means of gradually teaching his Messiahship and divinity since it was not overcharged, such as "Son of David," with the temporal notion of the Messiah. See *Apocalyptic Messianism*, Vol 1, p. 1315.

In the first three Gospels the expression is used only by Jesus when speaking of himself, and always prior to the resurrection. In fact, in the whole New Testament no one ever addresses Jesus by that title, nor is it used of him in any narrative or saying about him. Exceptions are in Acts 7, 56; Ap 1, 13; 14, 14 where there is an intentional allusion to Dn 7, 13. John stresses the origin of the Son of Man from heaven. See Jn 1, 51 n.

8, 22: A true disciple must not let family and relatives interfere with following Christ. "Leave the dead" (the spiritually dead), bury their own dead (physically dead). Recent philological attempts to soften the sternness of this saying have been unsuccessful.

8, 23-27: See par Mk 4, 35-40; Lk 8, 22-25. Mt and Lk depend on the account in Mk, even though the wording is rather different.

8, 23: *Boat*: the same Greek word is used for fishing boats as well as for sea vessels (Acts 27, 2-44).

8, 24: The lake of Galilee was and still is notorious for its sudden storms and calms. Consequently, it is not easy to refute those who suggest that this is a true historical incident during which Jesus remained calm but did not quiet the lake, and the disciples merely attributed the sudden calm to him. According to these critics, it was characteristic of the inspired writers to recount this event by means of a dramatic dialogue. The same critics point out that the incident shows the *belief* of the disciples in the power of Jesus over nature. See 8, 27 n.

8, 25: *Lord, save us*: this expression may show the liturgical influence of Mt's Church on the writing of the account. See the same expression on Peter's lips in 14, 30. The Greek word "save" is used in a material and spiritual sense in the New Testament.

8, 26: *Faith*: see Mk 4, 40 n.

27 And the men marvelled, saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

28 *Expulsion of the Devils in Gerasa* Now when he had come to the other side, to the country of the Gerasenes, there met him two men who were possessed, coming from the tombs, so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Son of God? Hast thou come here to torment us before the time?"

30 Now not far from them there was a herd of many swine, feeding. And the devils kept entreating him, saying, "If thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go!" And they came out and entered into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the cliff into the

8, 27: *The men*: either the disciples or the people to whom the disciples related the story, or both. This spectacular miracle which portrays Christ as master of the elements is an important step forward in the disciples' growing awareness of Christ's divinity.

Because the narrative has the hallmark of an eyewitness account, especially in the Gospel of Mark, the opinion that the story is an invention to portray the fulfillment of Pss 64, 8 or 105, 9 ("He rebuked the Red Sea") is often rejected. To reject this opinion is not to deny that there are parallel narratives in and outside of the Bible, including Vergil's *Aeneas* (4, 554ff) and that the scene has been interpreted allegorically since the third century. The boat is the Church in a storm saved by Jesus.

8, 28-34: See par Mk 5, 1-20; Lk 8, 26-39. This is the first account of an exorcism in Mt's Gospel.

8, 28: *Gerasenes*: the Greek text of Mt's Gospel most probably says "Gadarenes." Gadara is about six miles southeast of the lake. Mk and Lk say "Gerasenes." Gerasa is about thirty miles southeast of the lake and does not accord well with the story (v. 32). Since neither town is "opposite" Galilee (Lk 8, 26), the locality of the episode remains unknown.

The greatest difference in these three accounts is that Mt and Lk mention only one possessed man. See other differences explained in 8, 29 n and 8, 34 n. According to the modern trend of interpretation, the differences are attributed to orally transmitted accounts of the same event rather than to the narration of two separate events. *Tombs*: they were thought to be the dwellings of demons.

8, 29: *Son of God*: here and in parallel passages, it means a holy man of God, without connoting that he was divine nor the Messiah. *Before the time*: this second question of the verse is found only in Mt. The implication is that there is a battle waging between Christ and Satan. It is understood that Christ's death, resurrection and ascension will inflict the final blow on Satan. See Mt 25, 41. Hence, the devils are saying that it is not time yet.

8, 32: There may have been a bit of humor for Jewish Christians to read about the drowning of unclean swine owned by pagans. See 10, 5 n.

33 sea, and perished in the water. But the swineherds fled, and going away into the town, they reported everything, and what
 34 had befallen the men possessed by demons. And behold, all the town came out to meet Jesus; and on seeing him they entreated him to depart from their district.

9

1 *A Paralytic at Capharnaum* And getting into a boat, he
 2 crossed over and came to his own town. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on a pallet. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; thy
 3 sins are forgiven thee." And behold, some of the Scribes said
 4 within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you harbor evil thoughts
 5 in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, and walk'? But that you may
 6 know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then he said to the paralytic—"Arise, take up thy
 7 pallet and go to thy house." And he arose, and went away
 8 to his house. But when the crowds saw it, they were struck with fear, and glorified God who had given such power to men.

8, 34: Mt does not have the sequel which is found in Mk 5, 18-20 and Lk 8, 38f.

9, 1-8: See par Mk 2, 1-12; Lk 5, 18-26. This is Mt's first mention of the Jewish leaders' opposition to the teaching of Jesus. Mt condensed the account given in the Gospel of Mk.

9, 2: *Their faith*: the full picture of the demonstration of the people's faith is related in Mk 2, 4 and Lk 5, 18f. Their faith in Jesus was so strong that they went through the trouble of stripping the roof and lowering the paralytic before Jesus.

9, 3-7: According to the scribes and Pharisees, an individual's physical illness was a sign of God's punishment for his sins. Not even the Messiah could forgive sins according to them. The Jewish priest could forgive only ritual transgressions in God's name through prayers and sacrifices. Jesus knew that, according to his adversaries, anyone can verbally pretend to forgive sins, but not everyone can cure a person. He replies that, for someone who has the authority to do so, one is just as easy as the other.

9, 6: *Son of Man*: By his curing the sick and forgiving sins, Jesus defines the meaning of Son of Man. See 8, 20 n.

Some non-Catholic experts, judging the conversation as an interpolation of the original miracle story, believe that Mt is, perhaps, defending the prevailing power of the Church to forgive sins in answer to the contemporary Jews who denied that power.

9, 8: The people were apparently awed at Jesus' authority to cure the sick (v. 6), not at his authority to forgive sins.

9 *The Call of Matthew* Now as Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting in the tax-collector's place, and said to him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him. | And it came to pass as he was at table in the house, that, behold, many publicans and sinners came to the table with Jesus and his disciples, and the Pharisees seeing it, said to his disciples, "Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners?" But Jesus heard it, and said, "It is not the healthy who need a physician, but they who are sick. But go, and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I have come to call sinners, not the just."

14 *The Question of Fasting* At that time the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, whereas thy disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they

9, 9-13: See par Mk 2, 13-17; Lk 5, 27-32.

9, 9: *Matthew*: see Introduction to the Gospel of St. Matthew on his identity and occupation. Note the magnetic personality that Christ must have had to attract even a well-to-do tax collector into surrendering his position to follow Christ.

9, 10: *The house*: the evangelist's house. *Sinners*: Gentiles.

9, 11: *The Pharisees*: it is difficult to imagine where the criticizing Pharisees and scribes (in all three accounts) were standing at this banquet since they were not partaking of it. Because of this artificial setting, some experts believe that the purpose of the vocation story was to serve as a frame for the sayings in vv. 12-13. According to this theory, Mt is not only recalling an event in which he defends his master's actions but the evangelist is simultaneously defending the contemporary practice of the Church to allow the Gentiles membership in it.

9, 13: A quotation from Os 6, 6. Here it means perhaps that fraternal charity is preferable to the cult, including the ritual purity of not eating with Gentiles. *Just*: said ironically of the righteous Pharisees.

9, 14-17: See par Mk 2, 18-22; Lk 5, 33-39.

9, 14: In the evangelist's account, the disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus. In the Gospels of Lk and Mk, the people ("they") come. *Fast*: some of the Pharisees voluntarily fasted Mondays and Thursdays to atone for the sins of the people, even though the Mosaic Law required only one day of fast a year (see Lv 16, 29 n).

9, 15: *Mourn*: Mk and Lk say "fast." *Bridegroom*: Jesus the Messiah. He is not adverse to voluntary fasting but considers it inopportune. His stay on earth is one long nuptial banquet. At the time of Christ the Jews applied the figure of a bridegroom to God not to the Messiah. *But the days will come . . . they will fast*: many scholars believe that these words, which allude to his death, are not from Christ but from the early Christians. One reason may be that Jesus

16 will fast. And no one puts a patch of raw cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a
 17 worse rent is made. Nor do people pour new wine into old wine-skins, else the skins burst, the wine is spilt, and the skins are ruined. But they put new wine into fresh skins, and both are saved."

18 *The Ruler's Daughter; the Woman with a Hemorrhage*

As he was saying this to them, behold, a ruler came up and worshipped him, saying, "My daughter has just now died; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she will return to
 19 life." And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples.

20 Now a woman who for twelve years had been suffering from hemorrhage, came up behind him and touched the
 21 tassel of his cloak, | saying to herself, "If I touch but his

usually predicts his passion and death to his disciples, not to the public at large as here. This saying may have been inserted because Christians fasted voluntarily on Wednesdays and Fridays, as the *Didache*, ch. 8, testifies. (The *Didache*, a Greek work, contemporaneous with the New Testament, comprises directions for catechetical instruction, worship, and ministry.)

9, 16-17: These two parables were most probably independent sayings delivered in unknown historical settings. Since Lk 5, 36 separates the pair of parables, this theory seems confirmed. The parables have nothing to do with fasting but are appended here to teach the need of a new look on practices of piety suitable to the Christian religion. The patch of raw cloth and the new wine represent Christian piety; the old garment and old wineskins represent Jewish piety.

9, 18-26: See par Mk 5, 21-43; Lk 8, 40-56. This is the only example in the first three Gospels of such an interweaving of two miracle stories which originally may have been separate. Mt characteristically abbreviates the story of Mk.

9, 18: *Ruler*: his name is Jairus according to the two parallel accounts. *Died*: the two parallel accounts say that she is close to death.

9, 20: *A woman*: The apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (fourth century) calls her Veronica. According to a tradition from the fourth century there was a memorial monument to her in Caesarea Philippi. Then in the twelfth century there appears for the first time a legend of a woman called Veronica who during the Passion wiped our Lord's face with her veil upon which he left his image. *Twelve years*: the age here and in Mk 5, 42 (the twelve-year-old girl) is coincidental. *Hemorrhage*: according to Lv 15, 25-27 she was considered impure as long as her continuous menstruation lasted. *Tassel*: the four tassels of the cloak were to serve as a reminder of God's commandments. See Nm 15, 37-41 n.

9, 21-22: *Saved*: restored to health.

9, 21: The woman thought that since Jesus was a wonder worker, he must have had some sort of curative magnetic power within him. A mere contact would work a cure. The crowds thought the same. See Mk 3. 10.

22 cloak I shall be saved." But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said, "Take courage, daughter; thy faith has saved thee." And the woman was restored to health from that moment.

23 And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the
24 flute players and the crowd making a din, he said, | "Begone, the girl is asleep, not dead." And they laughed him to scorn.
25 But when the crowd had been put out, he went in and took
26 her by the hand; and the girl arose. And the report of this spread throughout all that district.

27 *Two Blind Men* Now as Jesus was passing on from there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, "Have
28 pity on us, Son of David!" And when he had reached the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this to you?" They answered
29 him, "Yes, Lord." | Then he touched their eyes, saying, "Let
30 it be done to you according to your faith." | And their eyes were opened. And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, "See
31 that no one knows of this!" But they went out and spread his fame abroad throughout all that district.

32 *A Dumb Demoniac* Now as they were going out, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed by a devil.
33 And when the devil had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marvelled, saying, "Never has the like been
34 seen in Israel." | But the Pharisees said, "By the prince of devils he casts out devils."

35 *The Mission of the Apostles* And Jesus was going about all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every kind
36 of disease and infirmity. But seeing the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were bewil-

9, 22: See Lk 8, 48 n.

9, 23: *Flute players*: they were commonly used for funerals and feasts. According to custom, the girl was to be buried on the very day of her death.

9, 24: *The girl is asleep*: see Mk 5, 40 n.

9, 27-31: The more notable common traits with the same miracle of the two blind men at Jericho narrated in 20, 29-34 are: addressing Jesus as Son of David; Jesus touches their eyes; Jesus demanding their faith (20, 32). Some experts believe that Mt repeats this episode here to attain a cycle of ten miracles.

9, 27: *Son of David*: a favorite Messianic title in this Gospel.

9, 32-34: Note the similarities in Mt 12, 22-24.

9, 35: See 4, 23.

9, 36: See par Mk 6, 34. The metaphor of "sheep with no

37 dered and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest."

10

1 Then having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every kind of disease and infirmity.

2 Now these are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; | James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus; | Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot, he who betrayed him.

3 These twelve Jesus sent forth, having instructed them thus: "Do not go in the direction of the Gentiles, nor enter the towns of Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of

shepherd" is found in the Old Testament to mean Israel and God (or his representative).

9, 37-38: See par Lk 10, 2. *Harvest*: an Old Testament symbol for the time when God will intervene by judging the world at an end-time period (see J1 4, 13-16 n). The common interpretation is the need of vocations to save souls. A recent opinion is: the harvest here is depicted as present (not as a harvest to occur at the end of the world—see Ap 14, 15f; Mt 3, 12). It means here that God would be asked to send missionaries among the Jews who are living abroad while there is still time, since through the ministry of Jesus and the apostles the last chance is given to Israel to repent and find its shepherd.

10, 2-4: See table of the Twelve Apostles, p. 157.

10, 4: *The Cananean*: not connected with Chanaanite; it means zealot.

10, 5-42: Many Catholic and non-Catholic form critics hold that vv. 5-15 come from Jesus but that vv. 17-23 are an interpretation of his message at the time of this Gospel's composition, and vv. 24-42 form a chain of Christ's sayings on different occasions.

10, 5: *Do not go in the direction of the Gentiles*: many scholars believe that not only Jesus but also his apostles and disciples during his lifetime confined their ministry to the Jews of Palestine. The four exceptions mentioned in the Gospels, without listing their parallel accounts, are: the cure of the centurion's servant (Mt 8, 5-13); the exorcism of the Chanaanite's daughter (Mt 15, 21-28); the preaching of Jesus among the Samaritans (Jn 4, 40); most probably the exorcism of the two men (Mt 8, 28-34). *Towns*: "town" in Greek. *Samaritans*: in Jewish eyes they were apostates. See "Religious Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament.

10, 6: *Lost sheep of the house of Israel*: they are often understood as the poor people whom the Pharisees despised for not know-

7 the house of Israel. And as you go, preach the message, 'The
 8 kingdom of heaven is at hand!' | Cure the sick, raise the
 9 dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. Freely you have
 10 received, freely give. Do not keep gold, or silver, or money
 11 in your girdles, | no wallet for your journey, nor two tunics, nor
 12 sandals, nor staff; for the laborer deserves his living.
 13 "And whatever town or village you enter, inquire who
 14 is worthy; and stay there until you leave. As you enter the
 15 house, salute it. If then that house be worthy, your peace
 16 will come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace
 17 turn to you. And whoever does not receive you, or listen
 18 to your words—go forth outside that house or town, and shake
 19 off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it will
 20 be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the
 21 day of judgment than for that town.

16 **Opposition Foretold** "Behold, I am sending you forth like
 17 sheep in the midst of wolves. Be therefore wise as serpents
 18 and guileless as doves. But beware of men; for they will
 19 deliver you up to councils, and scourge you in their synagogues

and observing the fine points of the Mosaic Law. These people
 constituted the vast majority of the Palestinian Jews. The Pharisees
 referred to them as "the people of the land." Unsurprisingly, they
 left no writings.

10, 7: *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*: the apostles' preaching
 was to be characterized by the same theme as the preaching of the
 Baptist (see 3, 2 n) and of Jesus (4, 17).

10, 8: *Lepers*: see 8, 2 n.

10, 9-14: See par Mk 6, 7-13; Lk 9, 1-6. Although the accounts
 vary in detail, the keynote of urgency pervades them all (take nothing
 superfluous, leave the unappreciative, etc.).

10, 9-10: The apostles must rely on God's Providence.

10, 10: *No wallet for your journey*: no traveling bag. *Two tunics*,
 the wealthy usually wore a second tunic.

10, 11: *Inquire who in it is worthy*: seek out an honest person.
Stay there until you leave: the apostles were to accept hospitality from
 only one host in each center.

10, 12: *Salute*: bless.

10, 13: *Peace*: blessing. In accordance with a Semitic belief, a
 unaccepted blessing would return upon the one who bestowed it.

10, 14: For this custom see Acts 13, 51 n.

10, 16: *Wolves*: those who refuse to accept the apostles. *Serpents*:
 the wisdom of serpents is noted in Gn 3, 1. *Doves*: since, according
 to the ancients, the dove had no bile, the early Christians referred to
 the dove as a symbol of many virtues.

10, 17-23: The apostles are sent into the pagan world. Since Jesus
 said, "Do not go into the direction of the Gentiles" (v. 5), he did not
 tell them to go to the Gentiles in v. 18. See 10, 5-42 n.

10, 17-22: The parallel passages of Mk 13, 9-13 and Lk 21
 12-18 are part of the eschatological discourse of Jesus. Mt apparently

- 18 and you will be brought before governors and kings for my
 19 sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles. But when
 they deliver you up, do not be anxious how or what you are
 to speak; for what you are to speak will be given you in that
 20 hour. For it is not you who are speaking, but the Spirit of
 21 your Father who speaks through you. And brother will hand
 over brother to death, and the father his child; children will
 22 rise up against parents and put them to death. And you will
 be hated by all for my name's sake; but he who has per-
 23 severed to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in
 one town, flee to another. Amen I say to you, you will not
 have gone through the towns of Israel before the Son of
 Man comes.
- 24 "No disciple is above his teacher, nor is the servant above
 25 his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher,
 and for the servant to be like his master. If they have called
 the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of
 his household!

adapted vv. 17-22 from the eschatological discourse to his time (after 70 A.D.), prior to which Paul and the other apostles had already experienced reversals in preaching the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles beyond the frontiers of Palestine. Perhaps Mt himself was warning the missionaries of his day that similar treatment was to come, and it did. However, there is a possibility, according to a long-standing opinion, that these words (vv. 17-22) also came from Christ as a prophecy concerning the opposition waiting for the apostles after his ascension. But the above form-critical opinion does not resort to what it judges an unnecessary prophecy if the historical situation at the time of writing can explain everything smoothly.

10, 19: See Eph 6, 17 n.

10, 20: The "Father's Spirit" is used only here in the New Testament.

10, 23: This is one of the most disputed verses in the New Testament. It probably means that the apostles will not have finished evangelizing Israel when Christ ("Son of Man") will visit it again, not in person but through the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D. We must remember the Old Testament notion that God's visit means his intervention in history. The intervention here would be the destruction of Jerusalem.

10, 24-42: See 10, 5-42 n.

10, 24: The same saying is found in a context of humility in Lk 6, 40 and Jn 13, 16. The evangelist probably interpreted this saying as apt material for his missionary discourse.

10, 25-39: See par Lk 12, 2-9 and 51-53; 14, 26-27. Mt regroups these sayings of Jesus into his missionary "manual," from different historical settings that are more faithfully represented in Lk's Gospel.

10, 25: The disciple should be content to be like his teacher. If they have called . . . those of his household: See Mk 3, 22. *Beelzebub*: see 12, 24 n.

26 "Therefore do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing
 27 concealed that will not be disclosed, and nothing hidden that
 28 will not be made known. What I tell you in darkness, speak
 29 it in the light; and what you hear whispered, preach it on
 30 the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the
 31 body but cannot kill the soul. But rather be afraid of him
 32 who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not
 33 two sparrows sold for a farthing? And yet not one of them
 34 will fall to the ground without your Father's leave. But as
 35 for you, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. There-
 36 fore do not be afraid; you are of more value than many
 37 sparrows.

38 "Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I
 39 also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But
 40 whoever disowns me before men, I in turn will disown him
 41 before my Father in heaven.

42 "Do not think that I have come to send peace upon the
 43 earth; I have come to bring a sword, not peace. For I have
 44 come to set a man at variance with his father, and a daughter
 45 with her mother, and a daughter-in-law with her mother-
 46 in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his own house-
 47 hold. He who loves father or mother more than me is not
 48 worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than
 49 me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take up his
 50 cross and follow me, is not worthy of me. He who finds his
 51 life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake, will
 52 find it.

53 "He who receives you, receives me; and he who receives
 54 me, receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet
 55 because he is a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and
 56 he who receives a just man because he is a just man, shall
 57 receive a just man's reward. And whoever gives to one of
 58 these little ones but a cup of cold water to drink because he
 59 is a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

10, 28: *But cannot kill the soul*: but cannot kill life itself. *Soul and body in hell*: life and body in Gehenna.

10, 34: *To send peace*: to spread peace.

10, 35-36: The verses mean either that Christ divides people because he is a controversial figure, or that people have to leave their dear ones to follow him. Mt seems to accommodate Mt 7, 6, although he quotes him neither according to the Hebrew nor the Greek Bible.

10, 36: A man's own family will be his enemies.

10, 37: See 8, 22 n for a similar hard saying.

10, 38: *Cross*: mentioned here for the first time in this Gospel.

10, 39: Whoever seeks himself, destroys himself; but whoever destroys himself for the sake of Jesus will find himself.

10, 42: *Little ones*: not only children but unpretentious Christians.

11

1 The Baptist's Deputation Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, that he passed on from there to teach and preach in their towns. But when John had heard in prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples | to say to him, "Art thou he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answering said to them, "Go and report to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not scandalized in me."

7 Christ's Witness Concerning John Then, as they went away, Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what did you go out to see? A

11, 1: This stereotyped formula closes the second of the five discourses in the first Gospel.

11, 2-15: See par Lk 7, 18-28.

11, 2-3: *Sent two of his disciples to say to him*: in Greek, "sent a message through his disciples to ask him."

11, 2: See 4, 12 n.

11, 3: They ask whether Christ is the Messiah. It seems that "he who is to come" is not a Messianic title but a reference to the Baptist's description of him in 3, 11, which may have been taken from Mal 3, 1.

11, 4-5: Many moderns believe that in response to questions of who he is, Christ points to his works as a fulfillment of various Messianic prophecies in Isaiah, which depict the Messiah as a suffering servant. See Is 35, 5; 61, 1.

11, 4: Lk 7, 21 speaks of Christ as performing the miracles before he delivers the reply given in vv. 4-6.

11, 6: Beginning with what the Baptist thought the Messiah would be like, the opinion which explains the text more smoothly does not adopt the pedagogical viewpoint that the Baptist sent his doubting disciples to learn for themselves that Christ was the expected Messiah. The more modern opinion holds that the Baptist was at least experiencing a crisis in his faith because Christ was not acting as an Old Testament prophet as the Baptist foretold (3, 10-12). Some Catholics and non-Catholics propose that the Baptist thought Jesus was Elias who had returned to life as the precursor of Christ according to Mal 3, 1. Therefore, Christ says in Mt 11, 6: happy the man who does not waver in his belief in me.

11, 7-9: The crowds did not go to the Jordan River to see a reed dancing in the wind nor a luxuriously clad courtier, but an exceptional prophet.

11, 8: *Soft*: rich.

- 10 prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. | This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall make ready thy way before thee.
- 11 Amen I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the
- 12 kingdom of heaven is greater than he. But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it
- 13 by force. For all the Prophets and the Law have prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elias
- 14 who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- 16 "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the market place, who call to their companions, and
- 17 say, | 'We have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have sung dirges, and you have not mourned.' | For John
- 18 came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a devil!' | The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they
- 19 say, 'Behold a glutton and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners!' And wisdom is justified by her children."

20 *The Impenitent Towns* Then he began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles were worked, because

11, 10: The Baptist is the precursor announced by Malachia. See Mal 2, 17—3, 1 n.

11, 11: The greatest personage in the Old Testament, even if he is the precursor of the Messiah, is inferior to the most insignificant person who follows the New Testament teachings because of the superiority of the Christian way of life. The statement of Jesus is of added significance when we reflect that the scriptures never say that the Baptist formally became a follower of Christ. Even the Roman liturgy reflects this by presenting him as the precursor.

11, 12: See par Lk 16, 16 which has kept the phrase in its original context. One explanation of this obscure verse is: since the kingdom of Jesus had been announced, there were people who spent all their energies to "conquer" it.

11, 14: According to Mal 3, 23 Elias was to return as the precursor of the Messiah. Jesus proclaims to the well-disposed that the Baptist has come in place of Elias and therefore he [Jesus] himself is the Messiah. See the same teaching in Mk 9, 12.

11, 16-19: The Chosen People reject God's word regardless of how it is preached to them because they considered the Baptist too strict and Jesus too lax.

11, 19: *By her children*: in Greek, "by her works." The meaning of "And wisdom is justified by her works" is that there have been some who saw in the rejection of the Baptist and of Jesus the carrying out of God's wise plan for the world. Christ is not saying here that he is Wisdom incarnated.

21 they had not repented. "Woe to thee, Corozain! woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been worked the miracles that have been worked in you, they would have
22 repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of
23 judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted to heaven? Thou shalt be thrust down to hell! For if the miracles had been worked in Sodom that have been
24 worked in thee, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for thee."

25 *Jesus Draws Men Gently to Himself* At that time Jesus spoke and said, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and
26 prudent, and didst reveal them to little ones. Yes, Father, for
27 such was thy good pleasure. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and him to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and
29 I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find
30 rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

11, 21-24: See par Lk 10, 13-15.

11, 21: *Corozain*: found only here and in par Lk. -

11, 22: *Tyre and Sidon*: Jl 4, 4 denounced their evils.

11, 23: *Capharnaum*: the home of Jesus (4, 13). *Hell*: Hades. An allusion to the prophecy on Babylon in Is 14, 15. *Sodom*: see 10, 15.

11, 25-27: See par Lk 10, 21-22. The Gospels contain very few prayers of Jesus.

11, 25: The meaning of Christ's message and especially the mystery of his person were hidden from the learned.

11, 26: A reference to v. 25.

11, 27: This saying is reminiscent of Jn 6, 46; 17, 25. Jesus is saying that his knowledge of God is equal to the Father's knowledge of him and that he [Jesus] is divine. *To whom . . . reveal him*: Christ says that he is the only mediator between God and man.

11, 28-30: These verses resemble Sir 51, 23-27 where the sage invites men to carry the yoke of wisdom. Others maintain that v. 28 refers not to the everyday toilers but to those who are trying to be holy according to the Mosaic Law as interpreted by the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus offers his own Christian law as preferable. Although our Lord invites his followers to a severe moral life (5, 21-48), he calls them simultaneously to a life of peace.

12

¹ ***The Disciples Pluck Grain on the Sabbath*** At that Jesus went through the standing grain on the Sabbath; his disciples being hungry began to pluck ears of grain to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, "disciples are doing what it is not lawful for them to do the Sabbath." But he said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and those with him were hungry? how entered the house of God, and ate the loaves of proposition which neither he nor those with him could lawfully eat, only the priests? Or have you not read in the Law, that the Sabbath days the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are guiltless? But I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. But if you knew what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would never have condemned the innocent; for the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

⁹ ***A Man with a Withered Hand*** And when he had passed on from that place he entered their synagogue. And behold a man with a withered hand was there. And they asked him saying, "Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?" that they might accuse him. But he said to them, "What man is there among you who, if he has a single sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?"

12, 1-8: See par Mk 2, 23-28; Lk 6, 1-5.

12, 3-5: Jesus opposes the strict interpretation of the Pharisees regarding the prohibition of servile work on the Sabbath.

12, 3: A reference to 1 Sm 21, 1-6.

12, 5-6: According to Lv 24, 8 the priests broke the Sabbath by changing the bread, but they were not guilty since the temple is superior to the Sabbath laws. It is against this background that Jesus refers to himself as "greater than the temple."

12, 7: A quote from Os 6, 6 to illustrate that the excessive, legal-minded Pharisees have wrongly condemned the innocent disciples.

12, 8: On his own authority, Jesus allowed the apostles to pluck and eat the grain since he is greater than the Sabbath—a clue to his true identity.

12, 9-14: See par Mk 3, 1-6; Lk 6, 6-11. Here Mt follows Mk. The episode particularly exemplifies our Lord's teaching about "work" on the Sabbath (Mt 12, 1-8).

12, 10: The evangelist places the question on the lips of opponents of Jesus to prepare his statement on the sheep (vv. 11-12). This is possibly an insertion by Mt himself since it is not in parallel accounts. In Mk 3, 3 it is Jesus who asks the question.

12, 11: Jesus knew that this act was allowed by the Pharisees. The Dead Sea Scrolls discuss such a case. Counter questioning was a common Jewish method of disputation at that time.

much better is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful
 13 to do good on the Sabbath." | Then he said to the man, "Stretch
 forth thy hand." And he stretched it forth, and it was restored,
 14 as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and took
 counsel against him, how they might do away with him.

15 *The Mercy of Jesus* Then, knowing this, Jesus withdrew
 16 from the place; and many followed him and he cured them
 17 all, | and warned them not to make him known; that what
 was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who
 18 said, | "Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen, my be-
 loved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit
 19 upon him, and he will declare judgment to the Gentiles. | He
 will not wrangle, nor cry aloud, neither will anyone hear his
 20 voice in the streets. | A bruised reed he will not break, and a
 smoking wick he will not quench, till he send forth judgment
 21 unto victory; | and in his name will the Gentiles hope."

22 *Blasphemy of the Pharisees* Then there was brought to
 him a possessed man who was blind and dumb; and he cured
 23 him so that he spoke and saw. And all the crowds were
 24 amazed, and they said, "Can this be the Son of David?" | But
 the Pharisees, hearing this, said, "This man does not cast out
 devils except by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Every
 kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and
 26 every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And
 if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how
 27 then shall his kingdom stand? | And if I cast out devils by
 Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? There-
 28 fore they shall be your judges. | But if I cast out devils by

12, 15-21: In relating the refusal of Jesus to be identified as the
 Messiah (v. 16), Mt says (v. 17) that our Lord fulfilled the role of
 the servant of Is 42, 1-4.

12, 22-30: See par Mk 3, 22-27; Lk 11, 14-23.

12, 22: Lk 11, 14 mentions that the man was dumb; Mt here says
 that he was blind and dumb. Moreover, the account on the exorcism of
 the dumb demoniac in Mt 9, 32-34 resembles this one.

12, 23: *Son of David*: royal title of the Messiah. The people inter-
 preted the wonder described in this verse as typical of what they
 popularly expected of the Messiah whom they thought was yet to come.

12, 24: *Beelzebub*: the name of the god of Accaron (4 Kgs 1, 2f).
 There is no satisfactory explanation for why it became the name of
 Satan. It is commonly said to mean, in Hebrew, "the lord of the flies."

12, 27: *Your children*: the Jewish exorcists attributed their powers
 to God.

12, 28: The only explanation is that Jesus exorcizes in fulfillment of

the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or, how can anyone enter the strong man's house, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then he will plunder his house. | He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

29 "Therefore I say to you, that every kind of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this world or in the world to come. Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for by the fruit the tree is known. You brood of vipers, how can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man from his good treasure brings forth good things; and the evil man from his evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I tell you, that of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be justified, and by thy words thou wilt be condemned."

38 *The Sign of Jonas* Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Master, we would see a sign from thee." But he answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, and no sign shall be given

the Holy Spirit's promise to pour out his graces in the Messianic era, which means that this era has now arrived. Mt most probably departs from the usual "kingdom of heaven" (see 3, 2 n) to the "kingdom of God" to better contrast it with the kingdom of Satan.

12, 29: Satan is the "strong man" and "his goods" are those who are diabolically possessed. In short, Jesus says that his exorcisms have bound Satan and, therefore, he [Jesus] is plundering Satan's house.

12, 30: Jesus, the harvester of the last days ("gather . . . scatters"), asks whether people will join him or oppose him.

12, 31-32: This unforgivable sin is the adamant refusal of Christian faith. A person with such a disposition usually does not repent and thus is not forgiven.

12, 32: *It shall be forgiven him*: those who do not believe that the Son of Man is divine will be forgiven. *Either in this world . . . come*: a Semitic expression for complete impossibility. There is no implication here of forgiveness of sins in the next world nor of the existence of purgatory.

12, 38-42: See par Lk 11, 29-32.

12, 38-39: Since they ascribed the wondrous works of Jesus to Satan (v. 24), they asked for another sign to prove that he is the Messiah.

12, 39-40: *Adulterous*: unfaithful to God, in the Old Testament

- 40 it but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For even as Jonas was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of
- 41 the earth. The men of Nineve will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas
- 42 is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.
- 43 "But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he roams through dry places in search of rest, and finds none.
- 44 | Then he says, 'I will return to my house which I left'; and when he has come to it, he finds the place unoccupied, swept
- 45 and decorated. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be with this evil generation also."

46 *Jesus and His Brethren* While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brethren were standing out-

metaphorical sense. Jesus predicts the duration of his burial and implies his resurrection. Both will be a sign. Lk 11, 30 interprets the preaching of Jesus as the sign.

12, 40: *Son of Man*: see 8, 20 n.

12, 41-42: At the last judgment the Ninevites and the queen of the south will rise together with the present generation and will condemn it.

12, 41: On our Lord's reference to the Jonas story and the question of this story's historicity, see Introduction to the Book of Jona, Vol. I, p. 1637.

12, 42: A reference to the queen of Sheba. See 3 Kgs 10, 1-13 n.

12, 43-45: See par Lk 11, 24-26.

12, 43: *The unclean spirit*: a devil. It was a common belief that the demons lived in deserts. *Rest*: the demon finds more rest in a person than in a wasteland.

12, 44: *My house*: the man whom the devil formerly possessed.

12, 45: Just as it would have been better for the man if the devil had not left him, likewise it would have been better for the unbelieving Jews if Christ had never come.

12, 46-50: See par Mk 3, 31-35; Lk 8, 19-21. Jesus does not deny the relationship to his family but stresses the common relationship that one has to another through obedience to God. This spiritual relationship is even more real and intimate between his mother and himself than their human relationship. For similar spiritual ties, see 3, 22 n; 10, 37.

12, 46: They either wanted to tell Jesus something urgent or merely wanted to converse. *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers," but in the Hebrew meaning of cousins. See Mt 1, 25 n; 13, 55-56 n.

47 side, seeking to speak to him. | And someone said to him
 "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren are standing outside
 48 seeking thee." But he answered and said to him who told
 49 him, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" | And
 stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said, "B
 50 hold my mother and my brethren! | For whoever does the
 will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister
 and mother."

13

1 On that day Jesus left the house and was sitting by the
 2 water's edge. And as great crowds gathered about him, he
 got into a boat and sat down. And all the crowd stood on
 the shore.

3 *Parable of the Sower* And he spoke to them many things
 in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow

13, 1-23: See par Mk 4, 1-20; Lk 8, 4-15.

13, 3: *Parables*: there is no definition of a parable that commands the agreement of scholars. A descriptive definition may suffice. A parable is a lifelike developed comparison, varying in length, with a principal lesson or truth, e.g., the sower, Mt 13, 3-23. (We do not consider similes that are brief sayings such as, "Be wise as serpents," Mt 10, 16.)

Perhaps the fundamental difference between a parable and an allegory is that in the latter each detail has a meaning (see Mt 21, 33 n), but this is not so in the former. There is usually only one central meaning to each parable. The details in a parable are for stylistic effect. However, many parables have some details that do have meaning. They are technically called allegorical parables. "Pure" parables (the details of which have no special meaning), as opposed to allegorical parables, are rare (the Good Samaritan, Lk 10, 30-37). In practice commentators differ on the central meaning of a parable (see Mt 20, 1-16 n), on their number, and on the meaning of details in an allegorical parable. Another difference is: a parable is lifelike, an allegory is mostly not. In the parable a vine is a vine; in the allegory the vine may be Christ ("I am the vine, . . ."—Jn 15, 5).

A fable differs from both parable and allegory; it is more fantastic. The two fables in the Bible are the conversation of the trees in Jgs 9: 8-21 and the thistle-cedar conversation in 4 Kgs 14, 9-10.

Because the experts differ on whether brief sayings are parables or not, the estimated number of parables in the first three Gospels ranges from twenty-three to 101. In the number range we exclude John's Gospel because it is generally credited with no parables but only with allegories. Yet, it is discussed whether some of John's sayings may be called parables. Two of these sayings are: the light and darkness (12: 35f); the woman in travail (16, 21). On the other hand, allegories in the first three Gospels are few.

13 3-9: Jesus probably delivered this parable during the closing

- 4 | And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the
 5 birds came and ate them up. And other seeds fell upon
 6 rocky ground, where they had not much earth; and they
 7 sprang up at once, because they had no depth of earth; | but
 8 when the sun rose they were scorched, and because they had
 9 no root they withered away. And other seeds fell among
 10 thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them. And other
 11 seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hun-
 12 dredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He who has
 13 ears to hear, let him hear!"
- 10 And the disciples came up and said to him, "Why dost
 11 thou speak to them in parables?" And he answered and
 12 said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the king-
 13 dom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For to him who
 14 has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from
 15 him who does not have, even that which he has shall be
 16 taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, be-
 17 cause seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear,
 18 neither do they understand. In them is being fulfilled the
 19 prophecy of Isaiah, who says, 'Hearing you will hear, but not
 20 understand; and seeing you will see, but not perceive. | For
 21 the heart of this people has been hardened, and with their

phase of his Galilean ministry. In vv. 3-8, perhaps more than in any other "parable of growth," as those of the weeds, the mustard seed, and the leaven, Jesus faces the icy fact that his appeal to the masses is diminishing. Hence, the significance of his challenge (v. 9) lies in the invitation to observe and reflect on the meaning of the parable, namely: just as the first, unsuccessful attempts of the sower (vv. 3-7) did not bar Jesus from the final victory of a harvest yielding a hundred to one (v. 8), neither will his initial lack of success in planting his kingdom prevent its fruition. This is what moderns hold as the most probable meaning of the parable.

13, 8: *A hundredfold*: a hundred for one. A yield of seven and one-half was average harvest; a yield of ten was good. The abnormal yield at the time of the Messiah was hoped for in the Old Testament and in apocryphal books.

13, 10-15: One standard answer to the question why Christ spoke in parables is: he wanted to arouse the curiosity of those who were well disposed that they might ask for more explanations; on the other hand, the ill disposed would not care to understand and would not ask for more light. According to a more recent explanation the evangelist saw the sad experience of Isaiah repeated in the experience of Christ. In spite of Isaiah's zeal, the people would not be converted (see Is 6, 9-10 n). Now the difficulty is that the text (Mt 13, 14-15) reads as if God had intended the blindness of the people from all eternity. The best answer seems to be that this is merely the biblical way of expressing, not what God intended, but what actually happened. When the evangelists say that our Lord spoke in parables, "That seeing they may not see" (Lk 8, 10) and "Lest perhaps at any time they should be

ears they have been hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their mind, and be converted, and I heal them.'

16 "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears,
17 for they hear. For amen I say to you, many prophets and just men have longed to see what you see, and they have not seen it; and to hear what you hear, and they have not heard it.

18.19 "Hear, therefore, the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, but does not understand it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what has been sown
20 in his heart. This is he who was sown by the wayside. And the one sown on rocky ground, that is he who hears the
21 word and receives it immediately with joy; | yet he has no root in himself, but continues only for a time, and when trouble and persecution come because of the word, he at once
22 falls away. And the one sown among the thorns, that is he who listens to the word; but the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it is made fruitless.
23 And the one sown upon good ground, that is he who hears the word and understands it; he bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixtyfold, and in another thirtyfold."

24 *The Weeds* Another parable he set before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed
25 in his field; | but while men were asleep, his enemy came

converted" (Mk 4, 12) they meant that, as things stood, the majority of the Jews rejected Christ. The Jews did not want to "hear" nor "see" nor be "healed" nor "forgiven."

13, 16-17: See par Lk 10, 23-24 n.

13, 18-23: Many modern form critics believe that the explanation of the parable as we read it now in vv. 18-23 was not given by Christ but by the evangelists. They considered the audience of their own day who were apparently beset with difficulties in putting Christ's teachings into practice (see Mk 4, 17). Some reasons for this opinion are: 1. The words resemble more those found in the New Testament writings of a later date than those of the Gospels. 2. The second part of the parable does not contain Semitisms as does the first part. 3. The interpretation in vv. 18-23 speaks of the *words of Jesus*; the first part of the parable speaks of the *kingdom*.

13, 24-30: This parable is also commonly called the parable of the cockle, tares, or wild grain.

13, 24: The kingdom is not compared so much with a farmer as with the whole situation leading up to the harvest; this harvest is the final purpose of the comparison.

26 and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. And when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the weeds appeared as well. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? How then does it have weeds?' | He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' And the servants said to him, 'Wilt thou have us go and gather them up?' | 'No,' he said, 'lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, Gather up the weeds first and bind them in bundles to burn; but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

31 *The Mustard Seed and the Leaven* Another parable he set before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. This indeed is the smallest of all the seeds; but when it grows up it is larger than any herb and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and buried in three measures of flour, until all of it was leavened." All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without parables he did not speak to them; | that what

13, 26: *Blade*: crop.

13, 29: The "zizania" is a weed closely resembling the growing wheat.

13, 30: See 13, 36-43 n.

13, 31-32: See par Mk 4, 30-32; Lk 13, 18-19. The kingdom is not compared to a mustard seed as much as to a tree, which is the final stage of the process and purpose of the comparison.

13, 32: *Tree . . . branches*: Ezekiel and Daniel use the same metaphor several times. See Ez 17, 22-23 n. Near the lake of Galilee, the mustard seed grows to about eight to ten feet.

13, 33: See par Lk 13, 20-21. The parables of the mustard seed and leaven are apparently joined because of similar meaning, though they may have been originally delivered on separate occasions. Their meaning is that Jesus forms a universal kingdom out of insignificant beginnings. The original situation from which these two parables grew may have been the people's doubts about the kingdom. It is compared not so much with the leaven but with the whole process leading up to the mass of dough, the final stage and purpose of the comparison. *Three measures*: about fifty pounds, which would provide a meal of bread for over one hundred persons.

13, 34-35: See par Mk 4, 33-34.

13, 35: The psalmist (Ps 77, 2) prepares to explain God's activity in Israel's history. In citing the psalm verse, Mt does not mean to say that Jesus will reveal secrets, but the evangelist stresses the obscurity of the parables as he stated in vv. 13-15.

was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world."

36 *Explanation of the Parable of the Weeds* Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." So answering them he said, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seed, the sons of the kingdom; the weeds, the sons of the wicked one; | and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered up and burnt with fire, so will it be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all scandals and those who work iniquity, | and cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth. Then the just will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

44 *The Treasure and the Pearl* "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field; he who finds it hides it, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in

13, 36-43: These verses are found only in Mt. Recent Catholic and non-Catholic form critics regard this passage as the evangelist's, not our Lord's explanation. The critics arrive at this conclusion through at least thirty examples of peculiar Greek words and several ideas that are more evidently traceable to Mt himself than to Jesus. Consequently, these critics believe that the original parable with its purpose to show that the time of separation of the good and the wicked will be at the end of the world (vv. 24-40) was turned into an allegorical sketch of the last judgment, perhaps as a warning against presumption (vv. 36-43).

13, 40-43: An explanation of v. 30.

13, 44-52: Used as the Gospel of six different Masses.

13, 44-46: The two parables are commonly interpreted to mean that once a person discovers Christ's kingdom he must be willing to make even heroic sacrifices to remain in it. Some recent scholars believe that the emphasis is on the joy of the discoverer of the kingdom which so overwhelms him that the most heroic sacrifice is insignificant in comparison with the kingdom. Jesus often took up common oriental folktales and gave them an unexpected emphasis.

13, 44: Found only in Mt. Abstraction is made of the morality of the act. *Treasure*: a typical Palestinian treasure at the time of Jesus would be a jar full of jewels and silver coins.

46 search of fine pearls. When he finds a single pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

47 *Parable of the Net* "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea that gathered in fish of every kind. 48 When it was filled, they hauled it out, and sitting down on the beach, they gathered the good fish into vessels, but threw 49 away the bad. So will it be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among 50 the just, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth.

51 *Conclusion* "Have you understood all these things?" They 52 said to him, "Yes." | And he said to them, "So then, every Scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings forth from his storeroom things new and old."

53 *Jesus at Nazareth* And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, that he set out from that place. 54 And when he had come to his own country, he began to teach them in their synagogues, so that they were astonished, and said, "How did this man come by this wisdom and these

13, 47-48: The kingdom is not compared so much with a net as it is with the final stage of the whole procedure: the separation of the edible and worthless fish, which is the final purpose of the comparison. The lesson is the same as that of the weeds (vv. 29-30), i.e., the good and the wicked must be allowed to live together in the kingdom on earth till the end of the world.

13, 47: The net was dragged between two boats or pulled to shore by ropes. The lake of Galilee has at least twenty-four different kinds of fish.

13, 49-50: It is very probable, in view of recent studies, that vv. 49-50 are an abbreviated copy of vv. 40b-43. According to these studies, only the parable (vv. 47-48) comes from Jesus, but its interpretation (vv. 49-50) comes from Mt. One argument for attributing vv. 49-50 to Mt is that "the furnace of fire" (v. 50) is more suitable to weeds (vv. 40-42) than to fish (vv. 47-48).

13, 51-52: Only contained in Mt. When a scribe is converted to the Christian way, he has at his disposal treasures of the Old and New Testaments. There may be a deliberate pun between the name Matthew (*Matthaios*) and the Greek word for "instructed" (*matheteutheis*). Whether Matthew is thinking of himself here or not, the description fits him.

13, 53-58: See par Mk 6, 1-6; Lk 4, 16-24.

13, 53: This stereotyped formula closes the third of the five discourses in the Gospel.

13, 54: *His own country*: Nazareth.

55 miracles? | Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother
 called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon
 56 and Jude? | And his sisters, are they not all with us? Then
 57 where did he get all this?" | And they took offense at him.
 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor
 58 except in his own country, and in his own house." And because
 of their unbelief, he did not work many miracles there.

14

1 *Death of the Baptist* At that time Herod the tetrarch
 2 heard about the fame of Jesus | and he said to his servants,
 "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and
 that is why miraculous powers are working through him."
 3 For Herod had taken John, and bound him, and put
 4 him in prison, because of Herodias, his brother's wife. | For
 John had said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to have
 5 her." And he would have liked to put him to death, but he
 feared the people, because they regarded him as a prophet.
 6 But on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias
 7 danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he
 promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask
 8 of him. | Then she, at her mother's prompting, said, "Give
 9 me here on a dish the head of John the Baptist." And
 grieved as he was, the king, because of his oath and his
 10 guests, commanded it to be given. He sent and had
 11 John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on

13, 55-56: *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers." The vast majority of Protestants hold that Mary had other children besides Jesus. Catholic scholars hold Mary's perpetual virginity more from tradition than from scripture. The main scriptural bone of contention is that in Hebrew ("ah") or in Aramaic ("aba") the same word was used for brothers, near relatives, and cousins. Only from the context could the exact relationship be determined more specifically. The evangelists, who wrote Greek words but thought in Hebrew terms, used the Greek word *adelphoi* to mean brothers, near relatives, and cousins. But *adelphoi* in Greek normally means only full brothers. There is a different Greek word for cousins. The objection that Greek Gospel readers would understand *adelphoi* as full brothers may be valid, but the readers did not have in mind the mariological problem which *adelphoi* implies, because this problem arose only in postbiblical days.

14, 1-2: See par Mk 6, 14-16; Lk 9, 7-9. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, is the Herod of the Passion. He thought that our Lord was the Baptist who had come back to life.

14, 6: Dancing was a religious ceremony for the Jews. Dancing for entertainment as on this occasion was a Hellenistic custom.

14, 10: The Jewish historian Josephus also records John's execution in the fortress of Machaerus on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea

a dish and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother.
 12 His disciples came, took away his body, and buried it.
 And they went and told Jesus.

13 **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand** When Jesus heard this, he
 withdrew by boat to a desert place apart; but the crowds
 heard of it and followed him on foot from the towns.

14 And when he landed, he saw a large crowd, and out of
 15 compassion for them he cured their sick. Now when it was
 evening, his disciples came to him, saying, "This is a desert
 place and the hour is already late; send the crowds away,
 so that they may go into the villages and buy themselves
 food."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away;
 17 you yourselves give them some food." They answered him,
 18 "We have here only five loaves and two fishes." | He said
 to them, "Bring them here to me."

19 And when he had ordered the crowd to recline on the
 grass, he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking
 up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave
 them to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the
 20 crowds. And all ate and were satisfied; and they gathered
 21 up what was left over, twelve baskets full of fragments. Now
 the number of those who had eaten was five thousand men,
 without counting women and children.

22 **Jesus Walks on the Water** And immediately afterwards
 he made his disciples get into the boat and cross the sea
 23 ahead of him, while he dismissed the crowd. And when he had
 dismissed the crowd, he went up the mountain by himself
 to pray. And when it was late, he was there alone,
 24 | but the boat was in the midst of the sea, buffeted by the
 25 waves for the wind was against them. But in the fourth
 watch of the night he came to them, walking upon the
 26 sea. And they, seeing him walking upon the sea, were greatly
 alarmed, and exclaimed, "It is a ghost!" And they cried

14, 13-21: On the problem of one or two multiplications see par Mk 6, 34-44 n; Lk 9, 10-17; Jn 6, 1-15.

14, 13: *When Jesus heard this*: a reference to v. 12. *Desert place*: a lonely spot. The text is vague about the place, but it need not mean the eastern shore of the lake of Galilee.

14, 19: See Mk 6, 41 n.

14, 22-33: See par Mk 6, 45-52; Jn 6, 16-21. This event is commonly considered to be one and the same episode in all three Gospels.

27 out for fear. Then Jesus immediately spoke to them, saying, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

28 But Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it is thou, 29 bid me come to thee over the water." | And he said, "Come."

Then Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to 30 come to Jesus. But seeing the wind was strong, he was afraid; and as he began to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, 31 save me!" And Jesus at once stretched forth his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O thou of little faith, 32 why didst thou doubt?" And when they got into the boat, 33 the wind fell. But they who were in the boat came and worshipped him saying, "Truly thou art the Son of God."

34 *Other Miracles* And crossing over, they came to the land 35 at Genesar. The inhabitants of that place, as soon as they recognized him, sent into that whole country, and brought to 36 him all the sick, | and they entreated him to let them touch but the tassel of his cloak; and all who touched it were saved.

15

1 *Jesus and the Pharisees* Then Scribes and Pharisees from 2 Jerusalem came to him, saying, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the ancients? For they do not wash

14, 28: Peter most probably makes this request to assure himself that he is not the victim of an hallucination.

14, 31: *Lord, save me*: See 8, 25 n for the explanation of this expression as a possible liturgical formula. Peter's lack of confidence accords well with the rest of his character depicted in the Gospels.

14, 34-36: See par Mk 6, 53-56 n.

14, 33: *The Son of God*: the evangelist, writing after Pentecost, has the disciples profess their faith in Jesus as the *divine* Son of God. See 16, 13-17 n.

14, 34: *Genesar*: although it was located on the west side of the lake of Galilee, scholars wonder whether it was a town or a district.

14, 36: On touching the tassel see 9, 20 n.

15, 1-20: See par Mk 7, 1-23.

15, 1-7: Some rulings were not part of the Mosaic Law, but part of the "tradition of the ancients," the body of traditional interpretation of the Mosaic Law which gained as much importance as the Mosaic Law itself. Christ reprimands the religious leaders for equating their human laws with those of God.

15, 1: *Disciples*: in the Gospels not only Jesus but the disciples too are often criticized.

15, 2: Although the origin of the custom of washing hands is unknown, the Pharisees began it in the first century A.D. See Mk 7, 1-4.

3 their hands when they take food." But he answered and said to them, "And why do you transgress the commandment of 4 God because of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; and, 'Let him who curses father 5 or mother be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, "Any support thou mightest 6 have had from me is dedicated to God," | does not have to honor his father or his mother.' So you have made void the 7 commandment of God by your tradition. Hypocrites, well 8 did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, 'This people honors me 9 with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrine the precepts of men.' "

10 Then he called the crowd to him, and said to them, 11 "Hear, and understand. | What goes into the mouth does not defile a man; but it is what comes out of the mouth that 12 defiles a man." Then his disciples came up and said to him, "Dost thou know that the Pharisees have taken offense at 13 hearing this saying?" | But he answered and said, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted 14 up. | Let them alone; they are blind guides of blind men. But if a blind man guide a blind man, both fall into a pit." 15 But Peter spoke to him, saying, "Explain to us this 16 parable." | And he said, "Are you also even yet without 17 understanding? Do you not realize that whatever enters the mouth passes into the belly and is cast out into the 18 drain? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come 19 from the heart, and it is they that defile a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, im- 20 morality, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

15, 3-6: See Mk 7, 11-12 n.

15, 8-9: What Isaiah says of the people of his day is applied to those of Christ's day. See Is 29, 13f.

15, 15: *Peter*: Mt makes Peter ask in the name of the disciples. In Mk 7, 17 the disciples ask.

15, 18-19: *Heart*: mind.

15, 19: *Immorality*: fornication. See Mt 19, 9 n on the disputed translation of *porneia*. Mt reduces Mk's list of thirteen evils to seven. These lists of vices were frequently found in the teachings of contemporary Hellenistic philosophers. Mt's list differs also from the lists in Paul's letters (see Rom 1, 28-31 n).

4

21 *The Canaanite Woman* And leaving there, Jesus retired to
 22 the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite
 woman came out of that territory and cried out to him
 saying, "Have pity on me, O Lord, Son of David
 23 My daughter is sorely beset by a devil." He answered her
 not a word. And his disciples came up and besought him
 24 saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." | But
 he answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost
 25 sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and wor-
 26 shipped him, saying, "Lord, help me!" He said in answer
 "It is not fair to take the children's bread and to cast it to
 27 the dogs." | But she said, "Yes, Lord; for even the dogs eat
 28 of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then
 Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is thy
 faith! Let it be done to thee as thou wilt." And her daugh-
 ter was healed from that moment.

29 *Jesus Heals the Suffering* And when Jesus had departed
 from there, he went along the sea of Galilee; and he went
 30 up the mountain and sat there. And great crowds came
 to him, bringing with them the dumb, the blind, the lame, the
 maimed, and many others; and they set them down at
 31 his feet, and he cured them; so that the crowds marvelled
 to see the dumb speak, the lame walk, and the blind see.
 And they glorified the God of Israel.

15, 21-28: See par Mk 7, 24-30.

15, 21: *District of Tyre and Sidon*: the general area of these
 Mediterranean seaports of present-day Lebanon are considered the
 farthest northern point of Christ's travels.

15, 22: Mt changes the "Syrophoenician" of Mk to a "Canaanite
 woman."

15, 24: *The lost sheep of the house of Israel*: see 10, 6 n.

15, 26: *Dogs*: this is the contemptuous term used by the Jews in
 reference to the Gentiles. Some believe that the diminutive in Greek
 ("puppies") softened the remark.

15, 27: See 10, 5 n.

15, 28: *Faith*: it is difficult to know exactly what the woman's faith
 consisted in besides her confidence that Christ could heal. The belief
 in his power to cure does not mean that, in spite of addressing him
 "Son of David" (v. 22) which she may have learned from hearsay,
 she thought he was divine nor the Messiah.

15, 29-31: This may be the evangelist's way of summarizing events
 to indicate a lapse of time.

15, 30-31: It may well be that Mt summarizes many cures here
 whereas Mk (7, 32-37) selects one of a deaf-mute.

15, 31: The crowds may have been pagans, for the "God of Israel"
 may imply that they were not of Israel.

³² ***Jesus Feeds Four Thousand*** Then Jesus called together his disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, for they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and I am unwilling to send them away fasting, lest they ³³ faint on the way." And the disciples said to him, "But in a desert, where are we to get enough loaves to satisfy so ³⁴ great a crowd?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves have you?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fishes." ^{35,36} And he bade the crowd recline on the ground. Then taking the seven loaves and the fishes, he gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples gave ³⁷ them to the crowd. And they all ate and were satisfied; and they took up what was left of the fragments, seven full bas- ³⁸ kets. Now those who had eaten were four thousand men, ³⁹ apart from children and women. When he had dismissed the crowd, he got into the boat, and came into the district of Magedan.

16

¹ ***The Pharisees and Sadducees Ask a Sign*** And the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him to test him, and they ² asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But answering them he said, "When it is evening you say, 'The weather will ³ be fair, for the sky is red.' And in the morning you say, 'It ⁴ will be stormy today, for the sky is red and lowering.' You know then how to read the face of the sky, but cannot read the signs of the times! An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, and no sign shall be given it but the sign of Jonas." And he left them and went away.

⁵ ***The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*** And when his disciples crossed the sea, they found that they had for- ⁶ gotten to bring bread. And he said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

15, 32-38: See par Mk 8, 1-9 n.

15, 39: *Magedan*: the place is unknown.

16, 1-12: See par Mk 8, 11-21.

16, 1-4: See the similar episode in 12, 38-42.

16, 1: *Sadducees*: since this episode is most probably set somewhere in the district of Galilee, it is the only New Testament passage where the Sadducees are mentioned as dwelling outside of Judea. They are usually not far from the Jerusalem temple. *A sign from heaven*: a miracle.

16, 4: *Signs of the times*: miracles of Jesus. *An adulterous generation*: see 12, 39 n.

- 7 But they began to argue among themselves, saying, "We
 8 have brought no bread." But Jesus knowing this, said, "You
 of little faith, why do you argue among yourselves that
 9 you have no bread? Do you not yet understand, nor re-
 member the five loaves among five thousand men, and how
 10 many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves among
 four thousand, and how many large baskets you took up?
 11 Why do you not understand that it was not of bread I
 said to you, 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and
 12 Sadducees?'" Then they understood that he bade them
 beware not of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of
 the Pharisees and Sadducees.

13 *Peter's Confession* Now Jesus, having come into the district

16, 9-10: Scholars do not take these verses as a proof that there were two distinct miracles of the multiplications of loaves and fishes. They may be just the evangelist's way of referring to his two previous accounts.

16, 13-20: Used as the Gospel of four Masses. See par Mk 8, 27-30; Lk 9, 18-22.

16, 13-17: Form critics commonly propose that Mk and Lk relate the historical conversation at Philippi when Peter confessed belief in Christ as the Messiah, whereas Mt writes this episode in the light of his faith after Pentecost and has Peter confess his belief in Christ as divine. This opinion is roughly explained as follows: the question Jesus asked at Philippi was, "Who do men (crowds) say that I am" (Mk and Lk). The answer that Peter gave was what Mk and Lk say, namely: they say that you are the Christ, i.e., the Messiah. On the other hand, Mt goes purposely beyond the question and answer, wanting to show that Christ claimed divinity, and that Peter believed in it though not at that moment in Christ's life. This interpretative history is not distorted history. Consequently, in order to make Peter express belief in Christ as divine, the evangelist puts on the lips of Jesus a question which already states that he is the Messiah: "Who do men say the Son of Man is?" ("Son of Man" equates Messiah.) Peter then answers not only that Jesus is the Messiah (the "Christ"), but also "the Son of the living God." The latter expression does not in itself mean that Jesus is divine, but in this context Mt intends to have Peter acknowledge belief in Jesus as divine. In accordance with this view, v. 17 means that God the Father at Philippi confirmed Peter in what he had been learning all along, namely: that Jesus was the Messiah! Moreover, Mt leaves in v. 20 a clue that Peter historically confessed belief in Jesus as only Messiah since in Mt's account Jesus commands his disciples to tell no one that he was "Jesus the Christ"—the Messiah. If Peter had really confessed at Philippi that Jesus was divine, why did not Mt have our Lord forbid the disciples to say that he was divine? Therefore, Mt relates in v. 20 what happened historically at Philippi, but in v. 16 ("the Son of the living God") Mt is influenced by his postpentecostal faith in Christ as divine.

16, 13: *Caesarea Philippi*: see Mk 8, 27 n.

of Caesarea Philippi, began to ask his disciples, saying,
 14 "Who do men say the Son of Man is?" But they said, "Some
 say, John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others, Jeremias,
 15 or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do
 16 you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said,
 17 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." | Then
 Jesus answered and said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona,
 for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my
 18 Father in heaven. And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and
 upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of
 19 hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the
 keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt
 bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever thou

16, 14: According to popular beliefs, it was circulated that the precursor of the Messiah was to be Elias (see 11, 14 n), or Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

16, 17: *Blessed . . . blood*: a translation without the Semitism is: "Happy are you, Simon, son of John, for no man has. . ."

16, 18: *Peter (Petros) . . . rock (petra)*: the Greek word for Peter here is *Petros*. Its Aramaic equivalent is *Kepha* (rock). In other New Testament passages, *Kepha* is transliterated into Greek as *Kephas* (Gal 1, 18). In spite of recent research it still seems safe to say that neither *Petros* nor *Kepha* was used as a proper name before Christ used it here or previously (see Jn 1, 42 n) to symbolize Peter as head of his Church. *Church*: in the Gospels the Greek word *ekklesia*, a translation of the Hebrew word *qahal* (assembly), is used only here and in 18, 17. It refers to Christ's followers called into "the kingdom of heaven" (or the kingdom of God; see 3, 2 n). *Hell*: in Greek, "*Hades*," the kingdom of the dead, both good and evil. *Hades* practically equates the Hebrew *sheol*. In the expression, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," the gates personify Satan's power over death and of evil, which will not triumph over the Church of Jesus. Positively stated, the same Church will deliver men on earth from Satan's evil powers.

16, 19: *Keys*: Jesus entrusts Peter with the keys to open the gates of heaven to allow entrance only to those who have become worthy through his Church. *Bind . . . loose*: these legal terms were used by the Jews in the sense of permitting and forbidding. Peter's decisions of admitting into and excluding from the Church will be ratified by God in heaven. This power of binding and losing also includes the power to teach, and especially to forgive sins (see 18, 18 n). This text proves that Christ promised Peter to be the head of the apostles and of his Church, yet from this text itself it cannot be proven that Christ promised the power of primacy to Peter's successors. Nevertheless, Catholics hold that Jesus implied that Peter's primacy be handed down to his successors since our Lord founded a Church that he wanted to continue after Peter's death.

The form-critical interpretation above (16, 13-17 n) does not weaken Christ's bestowal of the primacy upon Peter (vv. 18-19), for there is no strict necessity of a revelation of Christ's divinity before the promise of the primacy to Peter.

20 shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged his disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 *Passion and Resurrection Foretold* From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and Scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and on the third day rise again.

22 And Peter taking him aside, began to chide him, saying, "Far be it from thee, O Lord; this will never happen to thee."

23 | He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, satan, thou art a scandal to me; for thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men."

24 *The Doctrine of the Cross* Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself,

25 and take up his cross, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake

26 will find it. For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what

27 will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will render to everyone according to his con-

28 duct. Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing

16, 21-23: The first announcement of the Passion. See par Mk 8 31-33; Lk 9, 22. For the second announcement see Mt 17, 21-22

16, 23: *Satan*: see Mk 8, 33 n. To answer the question why Jesu reprimanded Peter so harshly for misunderstanding his Messiaship immediately after praising the apostle (v. 17) and promising him the primacy, some Catholics, referring to Jn 21, 15-17, maintain that Jesus promised the primacy after the resurrection when he also bestowed it on Peter. This would facilitate the understanding of Peter's confession of Christ's divinity. It would mean that Mt simply transposed the account from a time after the resurrection to the episode at Caesarea Philippi.

16, 24-28: Used as the Gospel of six Masses. See par Mk 8, 34-39 Lk 9, 23-27.

16, 25-27: If a person disowns our Lord to save his life (vv. 25f) Christ will disown him at the end of the world (v. 27).

16, 25: Whoever is determined to save himself will destroy himself, but whoever destroys himself for our Lord's sake will find himself

16, 26: *But suffer the loss of his own soul?*: the phrase means at the cost of his own destruction. *His own soul*: his own self.

16, 27: *In the glory*: with the glory. The whole verse refers to Christ's final coming as judge at the end of the world. *Render . . . conduct*: see Ps 61, 13 n.

16, 28: Many consider this verse an allusion to the coming of Christ (the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D.) See 10, 23 n.

here who will not taste death, till they have seen the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

17

- ¹ *Jesus Transfigured* Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John, and led them up a high
² mountain by themselves, | and was transfigured before them. And his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white
³ as snow. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and

17, 1-8: See par Mk 9, 1-7; Lk 9, 28-36. There were probably two original sources: the account in Mk (on which Mt and Lk depended), and 2 Pt 1, 16-18. There is no satisfactory explanation why this scene is lacking in John's Gospel. Furthermore, the opinion that the transfiguration scene was an appearance of Christ after Easter but was projected back into his life before Easter has not gained wide acceptance. One serious objection is that Elias and Moses are not biblically associated with the resurrection.

The modern trend among scholars is to study the theological meaning of the scene, the principal interest of the sacred writers, rather than what happened historically, which may never be known with certainty. Some questions as to historicity would be: Were there real appearances of Moses and Elias? Did a visible change in Christ's form take place? Was it a real cloud and a real voice? Those who attempt to describe the historical nucleus of what happened differ among themselves, but they agree on a true vision enjoyed by Jesus or by Peter.

Regarding the opinions about the theological meaning of the transfiguration, modern Catholic biblicists tend to hold that the three apostles may have caught only a transient glimpse of Jesus as the *divine* Messiah on that memorable day. The scholars add that the inspired writers intended to make their Christian readers understand the transfiguration as a manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah and also as being divine. Furthermore, one prominent view (Feuillet) proposes that each evangelist narrates the scene with a slightly different message. According to Mk, the transfiguration signifies an anticipation of the resurrection and final coming of Christ at the end of the world; according to Lk, the scene is a prelude of Christ's ascension; according to Mt, the transfiguration means primarily that Jesus is the teacher of men and, secondarily, that he is the new Moses. The other eminent view (Benoit), which is perhaps better supported with arguments than the aforesaid view, claims that Mt expressly presents Christ as the new Moses. In other words, Mt consciously compares Moses on Mount Sinai with Jesus on Mount Tabor (see Mk 9, 1 n). Like Moses, Jesus meets God on a new Mount Sinai and under the shadow of a cloud. Just as the face of Moses had "become radiant while he conversed with the Lord" (Ex 34, 29), so does our Lord's. Just as the followers of Moses acknowledged him as God's chosen teacher, so do Christ's three disciples acknowledge him as their teacher.

17, 1: *Mountain*: see Mk 9, 1 n.

17, 2: *As snow*: as light.

17, 3: *Moses . . . Elias*: see Mk 9, 3 n.

4 Elias talking together with him. Then Peter addressed Jesus, saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us set up three tents here, one for thee, one for Moses, 5 and one for Elias." As he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am 6 well pleased; hear him." And on hearing it the disciples 7 fell on their faces and were exceedingly afraid. And Jesus came near and touched them, and said to them, "Arise, and 8 do not be afraid." But lifting up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9 *On the Coming of Elias* And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus cautioned them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one, till the Son of Man has risen from the 10 dead." And the disciples asked him, saying, "Why then do the 11 Scribes say that Elias must come first?" But he answered and said, "Elias indeed is to come and will restore all 12 things. But I say to you that Elias has come already, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also shall the Son of Man suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them of John the Baptist.

14 *A Possessed Boy* And when he had come to the crowd, a man approached him and threw himself on his knees before him, saying, "Lord, have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic,

17, 4: See Lk 9, 33 n.

17, 9-13: See par Mk 9, 8-12.

17, 10: According to a current Jewish belief stemming from Mal 3, 23 Elias was to return to life as the precursor of the Messiah. Now, Jesus, the Messiah, says he will die. The disciples inquire how it would be possible that he die when Elias has not yet appeared to announce him.

17, 11b: *Elias indeed is to come and will restore all things*: Jesus does not mean that Elias himself will come in the future, but that the activity of Elias will come and has come in the activity of John the Baptist (vv. 12-13).

Many Catholics see no scriptural basis here or elsewhere that Elias will come before the end of the world.

17, 13: The expectation of Elias is reflected in many present-day Jewish customs such as the empty chair at the seder service.

17, 14-20: See par Mk 9, 13-28; Lk 9, 37-43. Mt and Lk curtail many of the details found in the account of Mk.

17, 14: The father's description of his boy's actions fits those of an epileptic, but he attributed them to a devil. The boy may have been both epileptic and possessed. Regardless, everyone thought he was possessed.

and suffers severely; for often he falls into the fire, and often
 15 into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, but they could not cure him."

16 Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall
 17 I put up with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him; and the devil went out of him; and from that moment the boy was cured.

18 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,
 19 "Why could not we cast it out?" | He said to them, "Because of your little faith; for amen I say to you, if you have faith like a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Remove from here'; and it will remove. And nothing will
 20 be impossible to you. But this kind can be cast out only by prayer and fasting."

21 *The Second Prediction of the Passion* Now while they were together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of
 22 Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, | and they will kill him; and on the third day he will rise again." And they were exceedingly sorry.

23 *Paying the Temple Tax* And when they had come to Capharnaum, those who were collecting the didrachma came to Peter, and said, "Does your Master not pay the didrachma?"

24 | He said, "Yes." But when he had entered the house, Jesus spoke first, saying, "What dost thou think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute or customs;

17, 16: Jesus, probably alluding to Dt 32, 5, takes the opportunity to reprimand the disciples and the people for their little faith.

17, 17: Jesus treats the boy as possessed by the devil whether he was or not. According to par Mk 9, 24, our Lord commands the devil directly.

17, 19: There is a similar hyperbole on faith in Jb 9, 5 and Ps 45 3.

17, 20: This verse is an interpolation from Mk 9, 28. Consequently Mt 17, 19 sees in this exorcism-story a lesson of faith, whereas Mk sees a lesson of prayer. See Mk 9, 28 n. In other words, the two evangelists differ in their answer to the question of the disciples who did not succeed in exorcising.

17, 21-22: See par Mk 9, 29-31; Lk 9, 44-45. For the third announcement see Mt 20, 17-19.

17, 23-26: Contained only in Mt. Every Jewish male of twenty years or over paid a tax for the maintenance of the temple according to Ex 30, 13.

17, 23: *Didrachma*: two drachmas (two denarii) or the equivalent of a laborer's wage for two days.

25 from their own sons, or from others?" And he said, "From
26 others." Jesus said to him, "The sons then are exempt. | But
that we may not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast
a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. And opening
its mouth thou wilt find a stater; take that and give it to
them for me and for thee."

18

1 *Against Ambition* At that hour the disciples came to Jesus
saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"
2 And Jesus called a little child to him, set him in their
3 midst, | and said, "Amen I say to you, unless you turn
and become like little children, you will not enter into the
4 kingdom of heaven. Whoever, therefore, humbles himself
as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of
heaven.

5 *Avoiding Scandal* "And whoever receives one such little
6 child for my sake, receives me. But whoever causes one of
these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better
for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck,
and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

17, 25: *The sons then are exempt*: oriental kings did not usually
tax members of the royal family.

17, 26: *That we may not give offense to them*: Jesus implies that
since the temple tax is paid to God, a King, his son should therefore
be exempt. *Go to the sea*: the unusually striking miracle to the im-
mediate advantage of Jesus may be intended to stress this: although
Christ complies with the Mosaic Law, he is exempt from it as "Son"
of God. The emphasis may also be seen in the omission of the miracle
account itself. It is not necessary to think that Christ through divine
powers created a fish with a stater in it, but that he knew Peter
would find precisely this fish. (The supernaturality of Christ's act is
not marred by the fact that Herodotus tells a similar story.) *Fish*:
this incident has given the name "St. Peter's fish" to a fish which
incubates its eggs in its mouth. *Stater*: four drachmas (see 17, 23 n).
It would be an interpretation out of context to cite these verses in
favor of exemption of the clergy from taxes. *For me and for them*:
Jesus makes Peter share in the privilege of being God's Son.

18, 1-5: Used as the Gospel of four Masses.

18, 1-4: See par Mk 9, 32-36 for a more complete narrative, and
Lk 9, 46-48.

18, 4: *Humbles himself*: whoever regards himself as of little im-
portance as this child, that person is the greatest in the kingdom of
Jesus (Church).

18, 5: *Whoever welcomes an unpretentious Christian* ("little one")
for my sake, welcomes me (the same idea is in Mt 10, 14 and 40).

18, 6: The hyperbole expresses severe punishment for those who
scandalize. *Little ones*: not only children but unimportant Christians.

- 7 "Woe to the world because of scandals! For it must
needs be that scandals come, but woe to the man through
8 whom scandal does come! And if thy hand or thy foot is
an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off and cast it from thee!
It is better for thee to enter life maimed or lame, than,
having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting
9 fire. And if thy eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck
it out and cast it from thee! It is better for thee to enter
into life with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast
into hell-fire.
- 10 *The Lost Sheep* "See that you do not despise one of these
little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always
11 behold the face of my Father in heaven. For the Son of Man
12 came to save what was lost. | What do you think? If a
man have a hundred sheep, and one of them stray, will
he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go in
13 search of the one that has strayed? And if he happen to
find it, amen I say to you, he rejoices over it more than
14 over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so, it is
not the will of your Father in heaven that a single one
of these little ones should perish.
- 15 *Fraternal Correction* "But if thy brother sin against thee,
go and show him his fault, between thee and him alone. If
16 he listen to thee, thou hast won thy brother. But if he do not
listen to thee, take with thee one or two more so that on the
word of two or three witnesses every word may be confirmed.
17 And if he refuse to hear them, appeal to the Church, but if he

18, 8-9: See 5, 29-30 n.

18, 9: *Hell fire*: in Greek, "Geenna of fire." (See 5, 30 n.)

18, 10-14: An admonition to the disciples (v. 1) introduces the parable in v. 10. They must do their best to return the most insignificant members ("little ones") to the fold because they are very dear to the Father. The conclusion (v. 14) says the Father does not want them to perish. By means of the introduction and conclusion, Lk uses the same parable for a different purpose. See Lk 15, 3-7 n.

18, 10-11: *Their angels . . . Father in heaven*: the disciples are told not to despise the "little ones" because their guardian angels report to God all the injustices done to them.

18, 11: This verse is an interpolation from Lk 19, 10.

18, 12: *What do you think?*: a characteristic phrase of the evangelist.

18, 15: *Against thee*: most likely not in the original Greek.

18, 16: *On the word of two . . . may be confirmed*: a reference to Dt 19, 15.

18, 17: If he refuses the decision of the local community (*ekklesia*),

refuse to hear even the Church, let him be to thee as the
 18 heathen and the publican. Amen I say to you, whatever you
 bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever
 you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.

19 **The Power of United Prayer** "I say to you further, that
 if two of you shall agree on earth about anything at all
 for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father
 20 in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together for
 my sake, there am I in the midst of them."

21 **The Unmerciful Servant** Then Peter came up to him and
 said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I
 22 forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not
 say to thee seven times, but seventy times seven.
 23 "This is why the kingdom of heaven is likened to a king

let him be as excluded from it like a pagan and tax collector ("publican"—a synonym for sinner in those days).

18, 18: *I say to you*: the problem is: whom does Christ address with the plural "you" in bestowing the power to forgive sins? Catholics say the twelve apostles; Anglicans say the local community; many other Protestants say each individual Christian. *Whatever you bind . . . loose . . . heaven*: the power to forgive sins given to Peter (16, 19) is also given to the twelve apostles (see Jn 20, 22-23 n.).

18, 19: *Anything . . . ask*: a better translation is: any request you want to make. *It shall be done for them*: it will be granted to you. The majority opinion interprets these words as having been spoken to all Christians not only to the apostles. Some Catholic scholars believe that Jesus said these words after his resurrection, and Mt transposed them here.

18, 20: The presence of Christ here is that of mediator between Christians and God, not his physical nor Eucharistic presence.

18, 21-22: *Seven times*: this figure already meant "many times," but by "seventy times seven" Christ means that the neighbor must be pardoned as often as he needs it. Compare Lk 17, 4 but contrast Gn 4, 24.

18, 23-35: Included only in Mt. The penalty of punishment till debts are paid is not according to the Jewish royal court life, but according to oriental court life outside of Palestine or perhaps according to Herod's court (see vv. 25, 30, 34).

18, 23: *This is why*: by this parable, Mt intends to illustrate repeated forgiveness (vv. 21-22) but there is very little about repeated forgiveness in the parable. Hence, many believe the parable may have originally been part of Christ's teaching on the last judgment. *King*: the kingdom is not compared with a king, but the entrance into the kingdom at the last judgment is compared to a settling of accounts by a king. *Servants*: in the Bible, "the king's servants" meant his top-ranking ministers.

- 24 who desired to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun the settlement, one was brought to him who
 25 owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had no means of paying, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.
 26 But the servant fell down and besought him, saying, 'Have
 27 patience with me and I will pay thee all!' And moved with compassion, the master of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt.
 28 "But as that servant went out, he met one of his fellow-servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and he laid hold of him and throttled him, saying, 'Pay what thou
 29 owest.' His fellow-servant therefore fell down and began to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will
 30 pay thee all.' But he would not; but went away and cast him into prison until he should pay what was due.
 31 "His fellow-servants therefore, seeing what had happened, were very much saddened, and they went and in-
 32 formed their master of what had taken place. Then his master called him, and said to him, 'Wicked servant! I forgave thee all the debt, because thou didst entreat me.
 33 Shouldst not thou also have had pity on thy fellow-
 34 servant, even as I had pity on thee?' And his master, being angry, handed him over to the torturers until he
 35 should pay all that was due to him. So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if you do not each forgive your brothers from your hearts."

5

19

- 1 And it came to pass when Jesus had brought these words to a close, that he departed from Galilee and came

18, 24: *Ten thousand talents*: one talent equated the amount that a laborer earned in fifteen years of daily work.

18, 28: *A hundred denarii*: the wages that a laborer earned in a 100 days' work. This low amount is purposely contrasted with the highest number used in counting at that time, 10,000 (v. 24).

18, 35: The lesson of the parable is: if Christians do not forgive others, God will not forgive them. Commentators dispute whether his refers to God's forgiveness at the last judgment. The details should not be forced to yield meanings as in an allegory. Some of the details are: the different status of the two debtors; the intercession of the fellow servant; the type of punishment.

19, 1: This stereotyped formula closes the fourth of the five discourses in the Gospel.

2 to the district of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

3 *The Question of Divorce* And there came to him some Pharisees, testing him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man
4 to put away his wife for any cause?" | But he answered and said to them, "Have you not read that the Creator, from
5 the beginning, made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave
6 to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Therefore now they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore
7 God has joined together, let no man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command to give a
8 written notice of dismissal, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives; but it was
9 not so from the beginning. And I say to you, that whoever puts away his wife, except for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery."

19, 3: *For any cause*: the background of this question is Dt 24, 1 which allowed the husband to divorce his wife if he found in her "something indecent." At the time of Christ, the followers of Rabbi Shammai interpreted this phrase as adultery; the opposing school of Rabbi Hillel understood it for almost any trivial reason such as spoiling a dinner. The question put to Christ refers to Hillel's opinion, "for any cause."

19, 4-8: Jesus takes a neutral position in the Shammai-Hillel dispute and appeals to the indissolubility of marriage, which the inspired writers of Genesis proposed as the ideal.

19, 5-6: See Gn 2, 24.

19, 7-8: Moses only tolerated divorce. See Dt 24, 1-4 n.

19, 9: *Except for immorality*: the Greek word for "immorality" here and in the parallel clause (5, 32) is "*porneia*." It is evident, especially from 5, 31f, that Jesus repudiates the old law of divorce "except for '*porneia*.'" There are several interpretations of this exception. The Protestants and Greek Orthodox interpret the exceptions as permission for dissolution of marriage and freedom to remarry in case of adultery. Objections against this opinion of Shammai (see 19, 3 n) is its opposition to Mk 10, 11f; Lk 16, 18; 1 Cor 7, 10f, and the presumption that *porneia* means adultery. The Greek word for adultery is "*moicheia*."

The classic Catholic interpretation understands the exception as permitting a separation from bed and board with no dissolution of marriage.

Of the four other interpretations followed by modern Catholic biblicalists, the most recently discussed (not most favored) is the rabbinic interpretation. Its most important argument is that the Hebrew word "*zenuth*" used for invalid marriages of incestuous union in the "rabbinic" works of Tobias, Sirach, Talmud, and others was translated

¹⁰ His disciples said to him, "If the case of a man with
¹¹ his wife is so, it is not expedient to marry." And he
 said, "Not all can accept this teaching; but those to whom
¹² it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born
 so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs
 who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs who have
 made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.
 Let him accept it who can."

¹³ *Jesus Blesses the Children* Little children were brought to
 him then that he might lay his hands on them and pray;
¹⁴ but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said to them, "Let
 the little children be, and do not hinder them from coming
¹⁵ to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And when
 he had laid his hands on them, he departed from that place.

¹⁶ *The Danger of Riches* And behold, a certain man came
 to him and said, "Good Master, what good work shall I do
¹⁷ to have eternal life?" He said to him, "Why dost thou ask
 me about what is good? One there is who is good, and he
 is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the command-
¹⁸ ments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said,

"*porneia*" in Greek. This rabbinic opinion, if paraphrased, means: no one is allowed to dismiss his wife—except because of an invalid marriage, on grounds of incest, concubinage—and, if he remarries, he commits adultery. (A minority view holds that Mt himself added "except for immorality" because these invalid marriages were rampant in his day.)

19, 10: If it is going to be that difficult to divorce, it is better not to marry.

19, 11: *But those . . . given:* but those to whom grace has been given.

19, 12: *From their mother's womb:* they were born incapacitated.

19, 13-15: See par Mk 10, 13-16.

19, 15: *Such is the kingdom of heaven:* see Mk 10, 15 n.

19, 16-30: See par Mk 10, 17-31; Lk 18, 18-30.

19, 16-17: Mk 10, 17 has the man say, "Good master," and has Jesus answer, "Why do you call me good?" Mt, however, wanting to avoid the problem that resulted from the refusal of our Lord to accept the attribute "Good," has (in the Greek text) the man address Jesus *not* with "Good master" as in our English text, but merely with "Master." The man continues in Mt: "What good work shall I do to have eternal life?", and Mt (v. 17) has Christ awkwardly reply: "Why dost thou ask me about what is good? One there is who is good, that is God." These phrases fit better in reply to the address in Mk 10, 18: "Good master . . ." Since Mt's account is more intelligible only after a comparison with the narrative in Mk, many form critics believe this latter narrative to be the original one.

19, 18-19: See Ex 20, 12-16; Dt 5, 16-20.

"Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, | honor thy father and mother, and, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The young man said to him, "All these I have kept; what is yet wanting to me?" Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sad, for he had great possessions.

But Jesus said to his disciples, "Amen I say to you, with difficulty will a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven. And further I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." The disciples, hearing this, were exceedingly astonished, and said, "Who then can be saved?" And looking upon them, Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Then Peter addressed him, saying, "Behold, we have left all and followed thee; what then shall we have?" And Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting. But many who are first now will be last, | and many who are last now will be first."

19, 23-24: Christ does not condemn the wealthy classes but he warns them.

19, 24: The comparison of the camel is a typical Semitic hyperbole.

19, 26: In spite of Christ's emphasis on poverty, the disciples reflect the Old Testament notion that wealth is a sign of God's favor, and, consequently, ask: how can *anyone* be saved if the rich are not?

19, 27-29: Used as the Gospel of seven Masses.

19, 28: *Regeneration*: it means the new age of the future world. (The nature of the future world is not specified.) The word "regeneration" is found only in Ti 3, 5. It was a common Hellenistic word of the day. *Of his glory*: suitable to his glory. *Judging the twelve tribes*: one of several opinions is that the twelve apostles will "assist" our Lord at the end of the world in judging the Christians. (For the expression "the twelve tribes of Israel" signifying the Church see Ap 7, 4 n.) Compare Lk 22, 30.

19, 29: *For my name's sake*: read, "for my sake."

19, 30: The same idea opens and closes (20, 16a) the parable that follows. This idea explains why Mt placed the parable here.

20

¹ *Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard* "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. | And having agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And about the third hour, he went out and saw others standing in the market place idle; and he said to them, 'Go you also into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is just.' | So they went. And again he went out about the sixth, and about the ninth hour, and did as before. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing about, and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here all day idle?' They said to him, 'Because no man has hired us.' He said to them, 'Go you also into the vineyard.' But when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers, and pay them their wages, beginning from the last even to the first.' Now when they of the eleventh hour came, they received each a denarius. And when the first in their turn came, they thought that they would receive more; but they also received each his denarius. And on receiving it, they began to murmur against the householder, | saying, 'These last have worked a single hour, and thou hast put them on a level with us, who have borne the burden of the day's heat.' But answering one of them, he said, 'Friend, I do thee no injustice; didst thou not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is thine and go; I choose to give to this last even as to thee. | Have I not a right to do what I choose? Or art thou envious because I am generous?' - Even so the last

20, 1-16: Though they agree that it is not an allegory, modern scholars dispute about the central idea of the parable. Some see the parable, especially v. 15, as the reply of Jesus to his critics concerning his preaching to the undeserving sinners and ordinary people; others interpret the parable as a reversal of fortunes at the last judgment due to God's goodness. Regardless of these and other opinions, most experts agree that the owner represents God whose mercy goes beyond but not against his justice. On the other hand, many scholars do not think that the early workers signify the rejected Jews and the favored late workers signify the Gentiles.

20, 1: See Mt 18, 23 n.

20, 2: *Denarius*: a common daily wage of a laborer.

20, 3: *Third hour*: about 9:00 A.M.

20, 5: The "sixth" and "ninth" hours refer to about noon and 3:00 P.M., respectively.

20, 6: *Eleventh hour*: about 5:00 P.M.

20, 12: There is an added insinuation of God's goodness since nowhere in the parable is there any claim that the workers of the last hour merited their wages because of extra hard work.

shall be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few are chosen."

17 *The Third Prediction of the Passion* And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by
18 themselves, and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to
19 death, | and will deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified; and on the third day he will rise again."

20 *The Mother of James and John* Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons; and worshipping,
21 she made a request of him. He said to her, "What dost thou want?" She said to him, "Command that these my two sons may sit, one at thy right hand and one at thy left hand, in
22 thy kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of which I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We can." |
23 He said to them, "Of my cup you shall indeed drink; but as for sitting at my right hand and at my left, that is not mine to give you, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."
24 And when the ten heard this, they were indignant at the

20, 17-19: See par Mk 10, 32-34 n; Lk 18, 31-33. For the first time the Gentiles (as the future executioners) and the cross are mentioned. Many scholars see in the predictions of the Passion an allusion to the suffering servant of Is 53. After a minute study of all the Passion narratives the majority of scholars draw as the most probable conclusion that Jesus, not the evangelists, considered himself to have fulfilled the prophecy of the suffering servant of Is 53. See Lk 22, 35-37 n.

20, 20-28: See par Mk 10, 35-45.

20, 21: In Mk 10, 35, which is the older account, the sons make the request. According to some scholars, Mt deliberately made the mother the petitioner to disembarass the sons. One supporting argument is that after she makes the request the mother suddenly disappears from the scene and Jesus addresses the sons (not the mother) as in Mk's account. *Right hand . . . left hand*: not only places of honor but of authority. The brothers may be thinking that a temporal and political kingdom will be inaugurated after the crucifixion.

20, 22: *Cup*: see 26, 39b n. This is an Old Testament expression for the general destiny of a person, or for a particular joy or sorrow. Jesus alludes to his forthcoming Passion.

20, 23a: Jesus says that they shall share in his suffering in general, not only in his Passion.

20, 24: Perhaps the ten disciples were indignant out of jealousy.

²⁵ two brothers. But Jesus called them to him, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and
²⁶ their great men exercise authority over them. Not so is it among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to become
²⁷ great among you shall be your servant; | and whoever wishes
²⁸ to be first among you shall be your slave; | even as the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

²⁹ *The Blind Men at Jericho* And as they were leaving Jericho, a great crowd followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside heard that Jesus was passing by, and cried out, saying, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"
³¹ | And the crowd angrily tried to silence them. But they cried out all the louder, saying, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" Then Jesus stopped, and called them, and said,
³² "What will you have me do for you?" | They said to him,
³³ "Lord, that our eyes be opened." | And Jesus, moved with compassion for them, touched their eyes; and at once they received their sight, and followed him.

6

21

¹ *Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem* And when they drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, on the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, | saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them
³ to me. And if anyone say anything to you, you shall say that the Lord has need of them, and immediately he will send

20, 29-34: Matthew here speaks of two blind men, whereas only one is mentioned in par Mk 10, 46-52; Lk 18, 35-43. See Mt 9, 27-31 n.

20, 29: *As they were leaving Jericho*: in Lk 18, 35 the miracle occurs as Jesus approaches Jericho; in par Mt 9, 27 and Mk 10, 46 it occurs when he departs from the city. These small discrepancies are most likely due to oral transmission.

21, 1-11: See par Mk 11, 1-11; Lk 19, 29-38; Jn 12, 12-16.

21, 1: *Bethphage*: its exact site is unknown but probably it was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. *Mount of Olives*: the people were from of old (Za 14, 4) prepared to associate the Mount with the Messiah.

21, 2-3: Christ may have prearranged these matters.

21, 2-9: This is the first account of Christ's deliberately provoking and accepting the title of Messiah in public. See Za 9, 9-10 n.

21, 3: *The Lord*: it is rare in Mt and Mk to read of Jesus using

- 4 them." Now this was done that what was spoken through the
 5 prophet might be fulfilled, "Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold
 thy king comes to thee, meek and seated upon an ass, and
 upon a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."
 6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.
 7 And they brought the ass and the colt, laid their cloaks on
 8 them, and made him sit thereon. And most of the crowd
 spread their cloaks upon the road, while others were cutting
 9 branches from the trees, and strewing them on the road. And
 the crowds that went before him, and those that followed,
 kept crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna
 in the highest!"
 10 And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was thrown
 11 into commotion, saying, "Who is this?" | But the crowds
 kept on saying, "This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of
 Galilee."
 12 *Cleansing of the Temple* And Jesus entered the temple of
 God, and cast out all those who were selling and buying in
 the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-
 13 changers and the seats of those who sold the doves. | And
 he said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a
 house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of thieves."
 14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple,
 15 and he healed them. But the chief priests and the Scribes,
 seeing the wonderful deeds that he did, and the children cry-
 ing out in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of
 16 David," were indignant, | and said to him, "Dost thou hear
 what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have

this title in reference to himself. To the inquiring person "Lord" would mean only the owner, but to Mt and his Christian readers the word "Lord" meant here that Jesus was the divine Messiah.

21, 5: *Tell the daughter of Sion*: see Is 62, 11 and for the rest of this verse Za 9, 9. *Ass . . . colt*: the evangelist speaks of two animals according to the Greek text of Za 9, 9.

21, 9: *Hosanna*: see Mk 11, 10 n. *The Son of David*: a famous royal title of the Messiah. *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord*: see Ps 117, 26 n.

21, 11: The only other New Testament text where our Lord is called "Jesus . . . from Nazareth" is Acts 10, 38. He is usually called the Nazarene.

21, 12-17: See par Mk 11, 15-19 n; Lk 19, 45-48; Jn 2, 13-17.

21, 12: *Temple*: see Mk 11, 15 n.

21, 16: Ps 8, 3 refers to infants glorifying God and thereby implicitly refuting his enemies. Jesus implies that the scribes are the enemies.

you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?'"

17 And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and he stayed there.

18 **Jesus Curses a Fig Tree** Now in the morning, on his way back to the city, he felt hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he came up to it, and found nothing on it but leaves; and he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from thee henceforward forever!" And immediately the fig tree withered up.

20 And upon seeing this the disciples marvelled, saying, "How did it come to wither up immediately?" | But Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you shall say to this mountain, 'Arise, and hurl thyself into the sea,' it shall be done. And all things whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

23 **The Authority of Jesus** And when he had come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority dost thou do these things? And who gave thee this authority?" | Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you answer me this, I in turn will tell you by what authority I do these things. Whence was the baptism of John? from heaven, or from men?" But they began to argue among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the people, for all regard John as a prophet." | And they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." Then he in turn said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

21, 18-19: See par Mk 11, 12-14.

21, 18: See Mk 11, 14 n.

21, 19: According to Mk, the disciples noticed only the next day that the fig tree had withered. See Mk 11, 20 n.

21, 23-27: See par Mk 11, 27-33; Lk 20, 1-8 n.

21, 23: By *what authority*: what person with legal authority authorized the cleansing of the temple? The high priests (Sadducees) supervised the temple through the temple captain who was in command of the Levites, the temple police. If someone challenged the temple authority he was expected to support his own authority with some kind of miracle to show that he was God's prophet.

21, 25: Jesus implies that his authority, like that of the Baptist's, came from God.

28 *Parable of the Two Sons* "But what do you think? A man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, 'Son go and work today in my vineyard.' | But he answered and said, 'I will not'; but afterwards he regretted it and went 30 And he came to the other and spoke in the same manner. And 31 this one answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. | Which of the two did the father's will?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, the publicans and harlots 32 are entering the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him; whereas you, seeing it, did not even repent afterwards, that you might believe him.

33 *Parable of the Vine-dressers* "Hear another parable. There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge about it, and dug a wine vat in it, and built a tower; 34 then he let it out to vine-dressers, and went abroad. But when the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the 35 vine-dressers to receive his fruits. And the vine-dressers seized his servants, and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent another party of servants more numerous 36 than the first; and they did the same to these. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 37 "But the vine-dressers, on seeing the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall 38 have his inheritance.' So they seized him, cast him out of the 39

21, 28-32: The Jewish leaders who were the professional men of God (the second son), did not obey Jesus; but the tax collectors ("publicans") and harlots who were the professedly impious (the first son) did obey Jesus. A salient teaching here is: obedience in deed is better than obedience in word. Compare the God of love in Lk 15, 25-32 n.

21, 32: *Justice*: conformity to God's will. According to some form critics, this verse does not form part of the original parable (vv. 28-31), and the relation of these two sections and their consequent meaning is diversely interpreted by them.

21, 33-46: See par Mk 12, 1-12; Lk 20, 9-19.

21, 33: *Parable*: most scholars interpret this story as an allegory in which the cast is: the householder who represents God; the vineyard representing the Chosen People of Israel; the servants symbolizing the prophets; the son who symbolizes Jesus; the vine dressers signifying the unbelieving Jews; the "other vine dressers" (v. 41) who signify the Gentiles.

21, 38: See Mk 12, 7 n.

21, 39: Since par Mk 12, 8 reads more like a story, some form critics believe that Mt adjusted Mk to fit better the crucifixion of Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem.

- 40 vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-dressers?" |
- 41 They said to him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men, and will let out the vineyard to other vine-dressers, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."
- 42 Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, has become the corner stone; by the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes'?"
- 43 "Therefore I say to you, that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people yielding
- 44 its fruits. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."
- 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his
- 46 parables, they knew that he was speaking about them. And though they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the people, because they regarded him as a prophet.

22

- 1 *The Marriage Feast* And Jesus addressed them, and spoke
- 2 to them again in parables, | saying, "The kingdom of heaven
- 3 is like a king who made a marriage feast for his son. And he sent his servants to call in those invited to the marriage
- 4 feast, but they would not come. Again he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and every-
- 5 thing is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it, and went off, one to his farm, and another to his
- 6 business; and the rest laid hold of his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

21, 42: See Acts 4, 11 n.

21, 44: This verse is usually considered an interpolation from Lk 20, 18.

22, 1-14: A common modern opinion states that this parable and the similar one in Lk 14, 16-24 were made into two versions of one parable preached by Jesus. The version in Mt is an allegory. The following interpretation is generally agreed upon: the king symbolizes God; the Son, the Messiah; the wedding banquet, the kingdom of the Messiah; the first group of servants (v. 3) represents the prophets of the Old Testament whom the Chosen People repudiate. The "other servants" (v. 4) represent the repudiated prophets of another Old Testament era. The third group of servants (v. 8) symbolizes the apostles and disciples whom Jesus sent out to invite "both good and bad," sinners and Gentiles (v. 10).

22, 6-7: These two verses interrupt the continuity of the story. Form

7 "But when the king heard of it, he was angry; and he sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burnt their
8 city. | Then he said to his servants, 'The marriage feast indeed
9 is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy; go therefore to the crossroads, and invite to the marriage feast
10 whomever you shall find.' And his servants went out into the roads, and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; and the marriage feast was filled with guests.

11 "Now the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there
12 a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how didst thou come in here without a wedding
13 garment?' But he was speechless. | Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet and cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be the weeping, and
14 the gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

15 *Tribute to Caesar* Then the Pharisees went and took coun-

critics, therefore, commonly suggest that they are an expansion of Christ's parable. They believe that the couplet alludes to the persecution of the apostles and Christian missionaries and to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. as a past event. This opinion, presumably dating the writing of the Gospel after 70 A.D., does not necessarily deny that Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem.

22, 7: *Armies*: army.

22, 8-10: Jesus predicts the rejection of his apostles and future Christian missionaries by the Chosen People, and the invitation of the Gentiles into his kingdom.

22, 9: *Crossroads*: country roads.

22, 11-14: Many critics consider these verses as a separate parable because they are too loosely connected with vv. 2-10.

22, 11-13: God will expel the unworthy from his kingdom at the last judgment. For many critics the wedding attire symbolizes good works. Some support is found in 7, 21 where Mt teaches the need of good works to enter the kingdom.

22, 11: *Not on a wedding garment*: not properly dressed for a wedding.

22, 13: *Where there will be . . . gnashing of teeth*: where he will wall and gnash his teeth.

22, 14: This saying is commonly interpreted to mean that many are invited to enter Christ's kingdom but few are saved. There is no agreement on who the many and the few refer to in the previous verses. Many Catholic and Protestant form critics agree that v. 14 is not concerned with predestination; it is not concerned with whether most or only a few of all the baptized throughout the world and in all times will be finally saved. Because of the context of v. 14, it only concerns the Old Testament Jews plus the Jews and Christians of our Lord's day.

22, 15-22: See par Mk 12, 13-17; Lk 20, 20-26 n. Mt and Lk seem to copy Mk making only a few changes in vocabulary and style.

22, 15: *Trap him*: see Lk 20, 20 n.

16 **sel** how they might trap him in his talk. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Master, we know that thou art truthful, and that thou teachest the way of God in truth and that thou carest naught for any man; for 17 thou dost not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or 18 not?" But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, "Why do 19 you test me, you hypocrites? | Show me the coin of the tribute." So they offered him a denarius. | Then Jesus said to 20 them, "Whose are this image and the inscription?" | They said to him, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the 22 things that are God's." And hearing this they marvelled, and leaving him went off.

23 **The Sadducees and the Resurrection** On that same day some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came 24 to him, and questioned him, | saying, "Master, Moses said, 'If a man die without having a son, his brother shall marry the 25 widow and raise up issue to his brother.' Now there were among us seven brothers. And the first, after having married a wife, died, and having no issue, left his wife to his brother. 26 In like manner the second, and the third down to the seventh. 27,28 And last of all the woman also died. At the resurrection, therefore, of which of the seven will she be the wife? For they all had her."

22, 16: *Herodians*: See "Religious Background" in Introduction to the New Testament. *Do not regard the person of men*: you are not swayed by any man's opinion since you do not act out of human respect.

22, 17: *Tribute*: this poll tax coin is implicitly contrasted with the Syrian temple tax coin.

22, 20-21: Jewish distaste for cultic images were ruffled by representations of the head of the emperor, and especially by the inscription which, on the coins of Tiberius at least, called him "divine" and "high priest." Jesus, with a twofold meaning, says according to the Greek word, "give back" these things to Caesar; this pleases Jewish anti-Roman feeling, and also pleases the Pharisees who, rather than in a revolt, put their trust in God to free the nation.

22, 23-35: See par Mk 12, 18-27; Lk 20, 27-40.

22, 24: A reference to the levirate marriage (Dt 25, 5-10).

22, 25-28: Since the Sadducees disbelieve in the resurrection (v. 18) they intend to show its absurdity in this example: if there were a resurrection, to which of these seven husbands would she be the wife? To the Sadducees, this question was unanswerable.

22, 25: An academic question especially since the levirate marriage law was not observed at that time.

22, 28: The Sadducees apparently thought that the doctrine of the

29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You err because
 30 you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For
 at the resurrection they will neither marry nor be given in
 31 marriage, but will be as angels of God in heaven. But as to
 the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was
 32 spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham,
 33 and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the
 God of the dead, but of the living." | And when the crowds
 heard this, they marvelled at his teaching.

34 *The Great Commandment* But the Pharisees, hearing that
 35 he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered together. | And one
 of them, a doctor of the Law, putting him to the test, asked
 36 him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?"
 37 Jesus said to him, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
 with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy
 whole mind.'
 38,39 "This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the
 second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'
 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and
 the Prophets."

resurrection meant, for those who held it, that people would resume living as before with the same marital relationship.

22, 29: *You know neither the Scriptures*: they do not know that the levirate marriage in Deuteronomy applies only to life on earth, nor do the Sadducees know "the power of God" by which he can create a different type of life in heaven wherein the marital relationship is not as momentous as on earth.

22, 30: *As the angels*: who neither marry nor reproduce.

22, 31-32: There are different ways of explaining this argumentation. Here is one: according to Ex 3, 6, God revealed himself to Moses as the God of the people. This love for the people was to be gradually understood to include the resurrection of the body and soul. In later Old Testament times the people were taught the doctrine of the resurrection (Dn 12, 2-3). Now Jesus can explain, with a flash backward into history and with a flash forward, that the God of the patriarchs is not the God of the dead, but of those who will live fully in the future resurrection. The end of the world, then, will manifest the completion of God's love by which he chose his people. This consummation of love was not revealed at the time of Moses, but was then only implied. There are more direct texts in the Old Testament than this, but Jesus chose it because the Sadducees believed only in the Pentateuch.

22, 34-40: See par Mk 12, 28-31; Lk 10, 25-28 n.

22, 36: The Pharisees taught that there were 613 laws. These laws came from the Mosaic Law and from laws accumulating down the centuries. The legalists were in search of a synthesis.

22, 37: See Dt 6, 5 n; Mk 12, 29 n.

22, 39: See Lv 19, 18 n.

22, 40: Although the Old Testament writers spoke of love of God

- 41 ***The Son of David*** Now while the Pharisees were gathered
 42 together, Jesus questioned them, | saying, "What do you
 think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him,
 43 "David's." | He said to them, "How then does David in the
 44 Spirit call him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit
 thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool?'
 45 "If David, therefore, calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son?"
 46 And no one could answer him a word; neither did anyone dare
 from that day forth to ask him any more questions.

23

- 1 ***Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees*** Then Jesus spoke
 2 to the crowds and to his disciples, | saying, "The Scribes and
 3 the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses. All things, there-
 fore, that they command you, observe and do. But do not
 act according to their works; for they talk but do nothing.
 4 And they bind together heavy and oppressive burdens, and
 lay them on men's shoulders; but not with one finger of their

and neighbor, the prevailing teaching was justice. The originality of Jesus in this instance was to synthesize all laws into these two and in shifting the emphasis from justice to charity.

22, 41-46: See par Mk 12, 35-37; Lk 20, 41-44.

22, 42: The Pharisees correctly answer that the Messia ("the Christ") would be a physical descendant ("son") of David.

22, 43: Then how can David, under divine inspiration, call him (the Messia) 'Lord' (king)?

22, 44: See Ps 109, 1 n. *The Lord said to my Lord*: God said to the Messia-king. According to most scholars, David did not write Ps 109. See Ps 109, 1-7 n. Jesus and his contemporaries spoke of David as "author" of the psalms in the broad sense (see Introduction to the Pentateuch, Vol 1, p. 3). Christ's main concern was with something more important. See 22, 46 n.

22, 45: If David calls him (the Messia) 'Lord' (king), how can he (the Messia-king) be his (David's) son (descendant)?

22, 46: Catholics commonly understand that in this passage Jesus wanted to provoke the Pharisees to think of the Messia as someone more than a political king and a descendant of David. Jesus was suggesting: although the Messia would descend from David, the Messia would, because of his divine nature, be superior to David. The modern claim of some non-Catholics that these were not Christ's questions but those of the Christians who fabricated them to teach his divinity allusively, is refuted by other non-Catholics in this way: the first Christians taught Christ's divinity openly, not allusively.

23, 1-39: In all the Gospels there is no sterner speech of Christ than this.

23, 2-7: Those addressed are the crowds and the disciples.

23, 2: They are the successors of Moses as teachers of the Law.

23, 4: They make rules uselessly.

5 own do they choose to move them. In fact, all their works they do in order to be seen by men; for they widen their
6 phylacteries, and enlarge their tassels, | and love the first
7 places at suppers and the front seats in the synagogues, | and greetings in the market place, and to be called by men 'Rabbi.'
8 But do not you be called 'Rabbi'; for one is your Master, and
9 all you are brothers. And call no one on earth your father;
10 for one is your Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called
11 masters; for one only is your Master, the Christ. He who is
12 greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

13 *Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees* "But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men. For you yourselves do not go in, nor do you allow those going in to enter.

14 ["Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you devour the houses of widows, praying long prayers. For this you shall receive a greater judgment.]

15 "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you traverse sea and land to make one convert; and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold
17 of the temple, he is bound.' You blind fools! for which is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifies the gold?

23, 5: *Phylacteries*: see Dt 6, 8 n. *Tassels*: see Mt 9, 20 n.

23, 8-12: Part of these verses are directed to the disciples.

23, 8: "For one (God) is your Master (teacher), and all you are brothers" (pupils).

23, 9: *Father*: Jesus condemns the spirit of complacency with which the rabbis craved for this honorary title given to them by pupils because of their knowledge of the Mosaic Law. It would be anachronistic to use this verse as an argument against today's custom of calling priests "Father."

23, 10: *Christ*: Messia

23, 13-36: Part of these six woes are directed to the scribes and Pharisees.

23, 14: Most probably an interpolation from Mk 12, 40.

23, 15: *Hell*: "Geenna" in Greek.

23, 16-20: Jesus teaches: the purpose of taking an oath is to make it binding for the person who takes it. The scribes and Pharisees taught that if one swears by the temple or by the altar the oath did not involve any obligation. These legalists stated that the oaths must be taken by the *gold* of the temple and by the *gift* on the altar. Jesus, however, contends that in taking an oath one swears by something

- 18 'And whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever
 19 swears by the gift that is upon it, he is bound.' Blind ones!
 for which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the
 20 gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar swears by it, and
 21 by all things that are on it; and he who swears by the temple
 22 swears by it, and by him who dwells in it. And he who
 swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by him
 who sits upon it.
- 23 "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because
 you pay tithes on mint and anise and cummin, and have left
 undone the weightier matters of the Law, right judgment and
 mercy and faith. These things you ought to have done, while
 24 not leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out
 the gnat but swallow the camel!
- 25 "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because
 you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within
 26 they are full of robbery and uncleanness. Thou blind Phari-
 see! clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the
 outside too may be clean.
- 27 "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because
 you are like whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to
 men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and
 28 of all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear just to men,
 but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
- 29 "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! you who
 build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the tombs
 30 of the just, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our
 fathers, we would not have been their accomplices in the
 31 blood of the prophets.' Thus you are witnesses against your-
 selves that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets.
- 32 33 "You fill up the measure of your fathers. Serpents,
 brood of vipers, how are you to escape the judgment of hell?
 34 Therefore, behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and
 scribes; and some of them you will put to death, and crucify,
 and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute
 35 from town to town; that upon you may come all the just

greater than oneself, and since the temple is greater than its gold and the altar greater than the gifts on it, oaths taken by the temple and by the altar are binding. Jesus is lecturing here as a learned rabbi.

23, 23-24: Jesus reprimands them for carrying out unimportant laws to the detriment of important ones.

23, 27: *Whited sepulchres*: since tombs defiled those who touched them, they were whitewashed so that they could be seen more easily.

23, 33: *Hell*: "Geenna" in Greek.

23, 35: An allusion to 2 Par 24. 20-21.

blood that has been shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the just unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou who killest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforth until you shall say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

24

- ¹ *Destruction of Jerusalem and End of the World* And Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came forward to show him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said to them, "Do you see all these things? Amen I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."
- ³ And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when are these things

23, 38: *House*: the temple or the city or both. It is disputed what is meant by the abandonment of the place by God.

23, 39: '*Blessed is he . . . of the Lord*': perhaps this quote of Ps 117, 26 is a reference to Christ's coming at the end of the world, not to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Lk 13, 35).

24—25: See par Lk 21, 5-36; Mk 13 (more precisely, Mt 24, 1-36 follows closely Mk 13, 1-32). Mt collected all of Christ's teachings on the last days. The standard opinion understands Mt 24, 1-21 as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and vv. 24-31 as an allusion to the end of the world. The main dispute among the advocates of this opinion concerns the transitional verses (roughly between vv. 21 and 28) when the evangelist ends speaking about the one and begins speaking about the other. See par Mk 13, 19-23 n. A more recent opinion understands all of ch. 24 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem as sort of a rehearsal, omen, or forecast of the end of the world. In other words, the standard opinion considers the two events juxtaposed; the recent opinion sees them fused.

24, 2: Catholic scholars who hold that Mt wrote after 70 A.D. do not deny that Jesus himself had predicted the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem. Jesus did not predict the *year*, 70 A.D. See Lk 19, 43-44 n. *One stone upon another*: this hyperbole for complete destruction does not conflict with the archeological fact that some of the temple wall is still standing.

24, 3: The questions here refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, whereas in the parallels of Mk and Lk there is only a question about Jerusalem.

to happen, and what will be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"

- 4 And in answer Jesus said to them, "Take care that no one
5 leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I
6 am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. | For you
shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. Take care that you do
not be alarmed, for these things must come to pass, but the
7 end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and king-
dom against kingdom; and there will be pestilences and fam-
8 ines and earthquakes in various places. But all these things
are the beginnings of sorrows.
9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and will put
you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my
10 name's sake. And then many will fall away, and will betray
11 one another, and will hate one another. And many false pro-
12 phets will arise, and will lead many astray. And because
iniquity will abound, the charity of the many will grow cold. |
13.14 But whoever perseveres to the end, he shall be saved. | And
this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole
world, for a witness to all nations; and then will come
the end.

- 15 *Destruction of Jerusalem* "Therefore when you see the
abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel
the prophet, standing in the holy place—let him who reads
16 understand— | then let those who are in Judea flee to the
17 mountains; and let him who is on the housetop not go down
18 to take anything from his house; | and let him who is in the
19 field not turn back to take his cloak. But woe to those who
are with child, or have infants at the breast in those days!
20 But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on
21 the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as

24, 5: *Christ: Messia.*

24, 6:7: Between 30 and 70 A.D. there were wars, famines, and earthquakes. *The end is not yet:* the end of Jerusalem.

24, 9: See 10, 17-22 n. *All nations:* before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was preached to all the nations among whom the Jews were dispersed.

24, 14: *The end:* of Jerusalem. See 24, 9 n.

24, 15: The verse refers to the profanation of the Jerusalem temple by the pagan Syrian king, Antiochus (see Dn 9, 27 n). Mt writes of the event narrated in Daniel as a prototype for the profanation and destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. Stripped of the Danielic allusion, the sense is: when you see Jerusalem destroyed (v. 15), flee . . . (v. 16).

24, 21-28: See 24—25 n.

has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor
 22 will be. And unless those days had been shortened, no living
 creature would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those
 days will be shortened.

23 *The Signs of the Last Day* "Then if anyone say to you,
 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or, 'There he is,' do not believe
 24 it. For false christs and false prophets will arise, and will
 show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible,
 25 even the elect. Behold, I have told it to you beforehand. |
 26 If therefore they say to you, 'Behold, he is in the desert,' do
 not go forth; 'Behold, he is in the inner chambers,' do not
 27 believe it. For as the lightning comes forth from the east and
 shines even to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of
 28 Man be. Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be
 gathered together.

29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the
 sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light,
 and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of
 30 heaven will be shaken. And then will appear the sign of the
 Son of Man in heaven; and then will all tribes of the earth
 mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming upon the
 31 clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. And he will
 send forth his angels with a trumpet and a great sound, and
 they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end
 of the heavens to the other.

32 *Jerusalem's Impending Destruction* "Now from the fig
 tree learn this parable. When its branch is now tender, and
 33 the leaves break forth, you know that summer is near. Even

24, 22: *Elect*: the remnant of Christians on whose account the catastrophe is mitigated.

24, 26: *He is in the inner chambers*: he is concealed in the house.

24, 27: Just as lightning is clearly seen by everyone, so will the appearance of our Lord be clearly seen.

24, 28: The proverb was either a well-known saying, or it possibly came from Jb 39, 30. Just as a cadaver is unmistakably clear to eagles, so will the appearance of our Lord be unmistakably clear to men when he comes. But it is unclear whether Jesus will come via the destruction of Jerusalem or at the end of the world.

24, 29-31: These verses refer to the end of the world. See 24-25 n. The cosmic disturbances are stereotyped literary embroidery used to describe a divine intervention.

24, 30-31: See Mk 13, 26 n and Mk 13, 27 n.

24, 32-35: Largely depending on the meaning given to "this generation" in Greek (v. 34), scholars dispute whether these four verses refer to the destruction of Jerusalem or to the end of the world.

so, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even
 34 at the door. Amen I say to you, this generation will not pass
 35 away till all these things have been accomplished. Heaven and
 earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

36 *The Need of Watchfulness* "But of that day and hour no
 one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father
 37 only. And as it was in the days of Noe, even so will be the
 38 coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood
 they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in mar-
 39 riage until the day when Noe entered the ark, | and they did
 not understand until the flood came and swept them all away;
 even so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

40 "Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken, and
 41 one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the millstone;
 one will be taken, and one will be left.

42 *Exhortation to Vigilance* "Watch therefore, for you do not
 43 know at what hour your Lord is to come. But of this be as-
 sured, that if the householder had known at what hour the
 thief was coming, he would certainly have watched, and not
 44 have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must
 be ready, because at an hour that you do not expect, the Son
 45 of Man will come. Who, dost thou think, is the faithful and
 prudent servant whom his master has set over his household
 46 to give them their food in due time? Blessed is that servant
 47 whom his master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Amen
 48 I say to you, he will set him over all his goods. | But if that
 wicked servant says to himself, 'My master delays his coming,'

24, 35: Christ's teachings are more durable than the universe.

24, 36-41: Most followers of the standard opinion (see 24-25 n) seem to hold that these verses speak of the end of the world, not of the destruction of Jerusalem.

24, 36: Most textual critics agree that the Greek contains the expression "nor the Son" as in Mk 13, 32. See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to the Gospels.

24, 37-39: Perhaps the precise point of comparison is this: just as the people did not prepare for the flood, neither will they prepare for the coming of our Lord.

24, 40-41: The end of the world will be sudden. One will be "taken" into heaven, and another will be "left" to perish.

24, 42: Vigilance for the return of Jesus at the end of the world.

24, 43-44: The parable of the owner. Christ's audience is not identified. His disciples? The crowd? The scribes?

24, 45-51: The parable of the owner's steward who is charged with supervision. The unspecified vigilance (vv. 43f) consists here in accomplishing an entrusted mission.

49 | and begins to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and
 50 drink with drunkards, | the master of that servant will come
 on a day he does not expect, and in an hour he does not
 51 know, | and will cut him asunder and make him share
 the lot of the hypocrites. There will be the weeping, and
 the gnashing of teeth.

25

1 *Parable of the Ten Virgins* "Then will the kingdom of
 heaven be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went
 2 forth to meet the bridegroom and the bride. Five of them
 3 were foolish and five wise. But the five foolish, when they
 4 took their lamps, took no oil with them, | while the wise did
 5 take oil in their vessels with the lamps. Then as the bride-
 groom was long in coming, they all became drowsy and slept.
 6 And at midnight a cry arose, 'Behold, the bridegroom is
 7 coming, go forth to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose
 8 and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise,
 9 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' | The
 wise answered, saying, 'Lest there may not be enough for
 us and for you, go rather to those who sell it, and buy some
 for yourselves.'
 10 "Now while they were gone to buy it, the bridegroom
 came; and those who were ready went in with him to the
 11 marriage feast, and the door was shut. Finally there came also
 the other virgins, who said, 'Sir, sir, open the door for us!' |
 12 But he answered and said, 'Amen I say to you, I do not
 13 know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day
 nor the hour.

14 *Parable of the Talents* "For it is like a man going abroad,
 who called his servants and handed over his goods to them.
 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to an-
 other one, to each according to his particular ability, and

24, 51: Some expressions here are similar to those found in the *Manual of Discipline* contained among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

25, 1-46: The general theme is vigilance for the coming of Jesus at the end of the world.

25, 1-13: One opinion claims that the parable insists on the spiritual aspect of vigilance which is symbolized by the oil. (Does it, in turn, represent faith? Fervor?) Another opinion claims that the parable means: be ready immediately if you want to be ready when Jesus comes.

25, 14-30: See par Lk 19, 11-27 n. The main reason for the reprimand in the parable is the insufficient activity.

25, 15: A talent is not a coin but an amount (see 18, 20 n).

- 16 then he went on his journey. And he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more.
 17 In like manner, he who had received the two gained two more.
 18 But he who had received the one went away and dug in the earth and hid his master's money.
 19 "Then after a long time the master of those servants came
 20 and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Master, thou didst hand over to me five talents; behold, I
 21 have gained five others in addition.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many; enter into the joy of thy master.'
 22 "And he also who had received the two talents came and said, 'Master, thou didst hand over to me two talents; behold,
 23 I have gained two more.' | His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many; enter into the joy of thy master.'
 24 "But he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Master, I know that thou art a stern man; thou reapest where thou hast not sowed and gatherest where thou hast
 25 not winnowed; | and as I was afraid, I went away and hid
 26 thy talent in the earth; behold, thou hast what is thine.' But his master answered and said to him, 'Wicked and slothful servant! thou didst know that I reap where I do not sow,
 27 and gather where I have not winnowed? Thou shouldst therefore have entrusted my money to the bankers, and on my return I should have got back my own with interest. Take away
 28 therefore the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who does not have, even
 29 that which he seems to have shall be taken away. But as for
 30 the unprofitable servant, cast him forth into the darkness out-

25, 21: *Enter . . . master*: partake in the joy of your master.

25, 28: See Lk 19, 24 n.

25, 29: Some form critics believe that although the words in this verse must have been originally spoken by our Lord, they were not originally connected with this parable of the talents nor with that of the gold pieces (see Lk 19, 26 n). One argument of these critics is that this saying is used in par Mk 4, 25 which seems to be the more original context. Moreover, the saying is used as a generalizing conclusion and does not express exactly the meaning of the parables.

25, 30: See Lk 19, 27 n for the opinions of the relationship between this parable and that of the gold pieces.

side, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth.'

- 31 *The Last Judgment* "But when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then he will sit
 32 on the throne of his glory; | and before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another,
 33 as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; | and he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
 34 "Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; | for I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; |
 36 naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in
 37 prison and you came to me.' Then the just will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and feed thee; or
 38 thirsty, and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a
 39 stranger, and take thee in; or naked, and clothe thee? Or when did we see thee sick, or in prison, and come to thee?'
 40 And answering the king will say to them, 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.'
 41 "Then he will say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me no
 43 drink; | I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did
 44 not visit me.' Then they also will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' |
 45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did not do it for one of these least ones, you
 46 did not do it for me.' And these will go into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting life."

25, 31-46: Experts find it difficult to categorize this passage on the last judgment of *all* men at the end of the world. It is not a parable nor an allegory, but may be a moralizing "prophecy" of the end of the world. The imagery is in accordance with that of apocalyptic literature.

25, 35: In biblical imagery the lesson is: Christ will judge men according to their charitable work.

25, 40: *Brethren*: not only Christians but all who happen to be in miserable circumstances.

25, 46: Everlasting punishment and everlasting life are meant here in the strict sense.

II. THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

I. THE LAST SUPPER

26

¹ And it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these
² words, that he said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover will be here; and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

³ *The Council* Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered together in the court of the high priest,
⁴ who was called Caiaphas, | and they took counsel together how they might seize Jesus by stealth and put him to death.
⁵ But they said, "Not on the feast, or there might be a riot among the people."

⁶ *The Anointing at Bethany* Now when Jesus was in

26—27: Mt follows the account in Mk closely, but more significant is Mt's emphasis that nothing happened during the Passion which was not foreseen by Jesus. This emphasis is noticeable even from the brisk beginning of the Passion narrative (26, 2). Compare *The Passion according to St. Matthew* by Bach, di Lassus, Schütz.

26, 1-5: See par Mk 14, 1-2; Lk 22, 1-2.

26, 1: *And . . . finished all these words*: this stereotyped formula closes the last of the five discourses of the Gospel.

26, 2: *Son of Man*: see 8, 20 n.

26, 6-13: See par Mk 14, 3-9; Jn 12, 1-8. According to the modern trend among form critics there are two episodes. The first is the scene at Bethany: Mary the sister of Lazarus anoints the feet of Jesus with ointment. This scene is found in the parallel accounts of Mt, Mk and Jn. The second is that of the unnamed woman, presumably in Galilee, according to Lk 7, 36-50. Since both stories were similar, the details were easily confused in their oral transmission before they were written as we have them in the Gospels. Hence, the form critics hold as probable that *historically* the woman in Galilee did *not* anoint the feet of Jesus with ointment (Lk 7, 38b) but that this detail came from the Bethany scene. On the other hand, the details of the anointing of the feet (with ointment) and wiping them with her hair (Jn 12, 3) came from the Galilee account of Lk 7, 38 where the woman bathed our Lord's "feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head." In other words, what happened *historically* in the Galilee scene of Lk 7, 36-50 was that the woman wept and wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair. What happened *historically* at the Bethany scene was that Mary, the unnamed woman in the accounts of Mt and Mk, anointed the *head* of Jesus with ointment, not his *feet* as Jn 12, 3 says, because an anointing of the *feet* was unheard of in the Orient.

7 Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, | a woman came up to him with an alabaster jar 'of precious ointment, and
8 she poured it on his head, as he reclined at table. But when the disciples saw this, they were indignant, and said, "To what
9 purpose is this waste? | for this might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

10 But Jesus, perceiving it, said to them, "Why do you
11 trouble the woman? She has done me a good turn. | For the poor you have always with you, but you do not always have
12 me. For in pouring this ointment on my body, she has
13 done it for my burial. Amen I say to you, wherever in the whole world this gospel is preached, this also that she has done shall be told in memory of her."

14 **The Betrayal** Then one of the Twelve, called Judas Iscariot,
15 went to the chief priests, | and said to them, "What are you willing to give me for delivering him to you?" But they
16 assigned him thirty pieces of silver. And from then on he sought out an opportunity to betray him.

17 **Preparation** Now on the first day of the Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Where dost thou want
18 us to prepare for thee to eat the passover?" But Jesus said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Master says, My time is near at hand; at thy house I am
19 keeping the Passover with my disciples.'" And the disciples did as Jesus bade them, and prepared the passover.

20 **The Betrayer** Now when evening arrived, he reclined at

26, 11: Jesus does not mean that poverty must always exist in society. He merely wants to contrast the poor with the brief time during which direct acts of devotion toward him can be performed.

26, 12: Although our Lord knew that the woman intended to do him a good turn, either he interprets, or Mt makes him interpret, her action symbolically as an anointing for his burial.

26, 13: See Mk 14, 9 n. *This gospel*: the announcement of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

26, 14-16: See par Mk 14, 10f; Lk 22, 3-6.

26, 14: *One of the Twelve*: this is a hallmark of true history because the early Christians would never have attributed the betrayal of Jesus to "one of the Twelve" if it had not been so.

26, 15: *Thirty pieces of silver*: see 27, 3 n.

26, 17-19: See par Mk 14, 12-16; Lk 22, 9-13.

26, 17: *The first day of the Unleavened Bread*: see Lk 22, 1 n and Jn 18, 28 n on the date of the passover meal.

26, 18: See Lk 22, 10-12 n.

26, 20-25: See par Mk 14, 17-21; Lk 22, vv. 14, 21-23; Jn 13, 21-30.

21 table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating,
 22 he said, "Amen I say to you, one of you will betray me." And
 being very much saddened they began each to say, "Is it I,
 23 Lord?" | But he answered and said, "He who dips his hand
 24 into the dish with me, he will betray me. The Son of Man
 indeed goes his way, as it is written of him; but woe to
 that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were
 25 better for that man if he had not been born." And Judas
 who betrayed him answered and said, "Is it I, Rabbi?"
 He said to him, "Thou hast said it."

26 *The Holy Eucharist* And while they were at supper, Jesus
 took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave it to his disciples,
 27 and said, "Take and eat; this is my body." And taking a cup,

The account of Mt is very similar to that of Mk. Most moderns hold that Judas departed before the institution of the Holy Eucharist and was not ordained a priest. The morsel that Jesus gave him (Jn 13, 26) was probably the bitter herbs dipped in a sauce at the beginning of the passover meal.

26, 21: *One of you will betray me*: the famous *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci tries to paint the impression which these words made on the apostles.

26, 25: If the evangelist meant to report an actual historical conversation, it must have been conducted in a low tone. Nevertheless, the purpose of the verse was to show that Jesus knew his betrayer beforehand. This is another detail of the Passion story to illustrate that no one took his life, but he gave it freely.

26, 26-29: See par Mk 14, 22-25; Lk 22, 19-20; 1 Cor 11, 23-25. Modern scholars generally agree that behind the four parallel accounts of the institution of the Eucharist there are two independent traditions or presentations: the Matthew-Mark tradition, and the Luke-Paul tradition. The Aramaic flavor of the former points to a Palestinian origin. The latter indicates a Hellenistic center (Antioch?) plus Paul's own additions. The similarities of the two independent traditions are best explained by an unknown common source, rather than by one copying the other. The accounts are probably couched in the very words used at the liturgical Eucharistic celebrations of Jerusalem (Matthew-Mark) and Antioch (Luke-Paul). Neither account pretends to describe everything that happened at the Last Supper; they do not, for instance, mention the lamb—the main part of the meal. Mark and Paul recount only the parts of the Last Supper to which Jesus gave a new value.

26, 26: *This is my body . . . this is my blood*: since it is typical of oriental languages to omit the verb to be, it is not surprising to find scholars agreeing that Jesus himself never used the copula "is" in his native Aramaic tongue but simply said: "this my body . . . this my blood." Therefore, according to many modern scholars an argument based on the Greek word "is" cannot be sustained to prove the *real* presence as opposed to the symbolic presence of Jesus in the consecrated bread and wine. The same scholars, in understanding this text to mean the real presence, do not try to show the real presence

THE LAST SUPPER

(A Synchronized Table)

The Jewish Passover meal at the time of Christ	Biblical texts	An estimated location of the Gospel event within the Passover meal
1) A blessing of the lamb	Lk 22, 15-16	Jesus will no longer eat of this passover (lamb)
2) A blessing of the wine pronounced over the first cup	Lk 22, 17-18 (Mt 26, 29; Mk 14, 25)	Jesus will no longer drink of this wine
3) Each participant washes his right hand	Jn 13, 2-15	Jesus washes the feet of the apostles
	See Lk 22, 24-27 n	This dispute may have occurred after the washing of the feet
4) The eating of the first course (among other things there were bitter herbs, dipped in vinegar and eaten to recall the bitter years in Egypt)	Mt 26, 20-25 par, and especially Jn 13, 21-30	Jesus announces the traitor
	Jn 13, 30	Judas leaves the cenacle
5) The father recalls to the family the meaning and symbolism of the feast		
6) The chanting of the first part of the Hallel (Pss 112—113A)		
7) The second cup of wine is drunk		

8) The washing of both hands

9) The father blesses the unleavened bread, breaks and distributes it to each participant

Jesus pronounces the words of consecration over the bread (many scholars place this action here)

10) The eating of the paschal lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs dipped into vinegar

11) The father pronounces a blessing of thanksgiving over the third cup of wine which he passes to the participants

Jesus pronounces the words of consecration over the wine

12) The meal ends. Nothing else was allowed to be eaten

"After he had supped"

13) It is doubted that the custom of drinking a fourth cup of wine goes back to the time of Christ

*14) The singing of the rest of the Hallel (Pss 113B—117)

"After reciting a hymn, they went out to Mount Olivet."

* The fourteen steps are more for the sake of clarity than for the sake of complete itemization.

The Order of the Passover

1

SANCTIFY

The Seder begins with the ceremony of "Kiddush," a benediction over wine, which proclaims the holiness of the day.

2

LAVE

Water is poured, in accordance with ritual, over the hands of the person who conducts the Seder, in preparation for the next step, the dipping of food into water.

3

GREENS

A sprig of parsley or other vegetable is dipped in salt water and eaten to symbolize the meager diet and tears of the Israelites under Egyptian oppression.

4

DIVIDE

The one who conducts the Seder breaks the middle matzo of the three in the cover before him. The larger part is wrapped in a napkin and hidden to use as the "Afikomon" (dessert).

5

RECITE

The key to the Seder ceremony is the recital of the Passover story which includes "Mah nishtanoh," the familiar "Four Questions," asked by the youngest child.

6

LAVE

Now everyone performs the ritual washing of the hands and recites the usual blessing, as is customary before every meal.

7

BLESSING OVER MATZO

The traditional benediction (Mótzl) is recited, then a special blessing for the matzo. Each person eats two pieces of matzo, broken from the top and middle matzos in the cover.

8

BITTER HERBS

Everyone now eats bitter herbs . . . a symbolic reminder of slavery . . . dipped in "Charoseth," a mixture of apples, wine, and nuts, representing mortar.

9

COMBINE

Bitter herbs and matzos are eaten together in accordance with the interpretation of Hillel, a great Talmudic sage, who lived in the time of the Holy Temple.

10

THE MEAL

The Holiday meal is now served. Though festive, it usually starts with an egg dipped in salt water; the egg, a symbol of mourning, is a reminder of the destruction of the Holy Temple.

11

HIDDEN

It is now time to eat the half matzo, the "Afikomon." It is a playful custom for the youngsters to have "stolen" it and to request a gift for its return.

12

GRACE, PRAISE, ACCEPTANCE

The Seder concludes with prayers and songs of thanksgiving, praise, and rejoicing.

The above Seder is observed by modern Jews. Note the similarities with the Last Supper on the preceding table. The absence of the lamb and of wine drinking is also noteworthy.

he gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, "All of you
 28 drink of this; | for this is my blood of the new covenant,
 which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins.
 29 But I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit
 of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you
 in the kingdom of my Father."

30 *Peter's Denials Predicted* And after reciting a hymn, they
 31 went out to Mount Olivet. Then Jesus said to them, "You
 will all be scandalized this night because of me; for it is

from the formulas in themselves, but from the meaning of the real presence that Jesus attached to these formulas. Because Jesus purposely chose bread and wine he wanted the apostles to understand that, in and through these natural symbols of nourishment, he was really present to nourish them, and because of his authoritative and efficacious words he wanted the apostles to believe through faith in his real presence in the consecrated bread and wine. *Body*: although the Greek word here used in the four parallel accounts is "soma" (body), Aramaic experts claim that the Greek word "sark" (flesh) translates more accurately what Jesus said in his native Aramaic tongue. The early Christians probably used "body" because of the pejorative meaning in "flesh." Another reason why Jesus may have used the Aramaic equivalent of "flesh" is that the Semitic co-relatives are "flesh and blood" not "body and blood."

26, 27-28: It is a common opinion that Christ spoke his words over the wine while holding the third cup, like the Jewish father at the passover meal takes the third cup to bless it and to pass it on to those at table.

26, 27: *All of you drink of this*: Mt formulates into a command what Mk (14, 23) says in a declarative sentence: "they all drank of it."

26, 28: *The new covenant*: the vast majority of scholars agrees that this is an intended allusion to Ex 24, 4-8. In other words, the apostles rightly understood these words to mean that just as the blood of the victim sealed the old alliance between God and his people, so the blood of Christ (the victim on the cross) will seal the new alliance between God and the apostles. "Unto the forgiveness of sins" is an added explanation to "for many" in par Mk 14, 24.

26, 29: See Lk 22, 15-18 n. *When I shall drink it new with you*: the evangelist adds "with you" to par Mk 14, 25 "when I shall drink it new" to emphasize the union between Jesus and his apostles in the future kingdom. Moreover, the word "new" means that the wine ("fruit of the vine") will be different: it will be a higher form of intimacy.

26, 30-35: See par Mk 14, 26-31; Lk 22, 31-34; Jn 13, 36-38. Luke and John place this conversation during the meal: Mt and Mk, probably more accurately, place the conversation after the meal and on the way to Mount Olivet.

26, 30: *After reciting a hymn*: see the end of the table on the Last Supper, pp. 126-127, for the final part of the Hallel. See Pss 112-117 n. *Mount Olivet*: see Mk 14, 26 n.

26, 31: See 9, 36 n and Mk 14, 27 n.

written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

"But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee." But Peter answered and said to him, "Even though all shall be scandalized because of thee, I will never be scandalized." Jesus said to him, "Amen I say to thee, this very night, before a cock crows, thou wilt deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I should have to die with thee, I will not deny thee!" And all the disciples said the same thing.

II. THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS

The Agony in the Garden Then Jesus came with them to a country place called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples, "Sit down here, while I go over yonder and pray." And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be saddened and exceedingly troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is sad, even unto death. Wait here and watch with me." And going forward a little, he fell prostrate and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; yet not as I will, but as thou willest."

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "Could you not, then, watch one hour with me? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is

16, 32: See Mk 14, 28 n.

26, 34: See Mk 14, 30 n on the different accounts of the predictions.

26, 36-46: See par Mk 14, 32-42; Lk 22, 40-46; Jn 18, 1.

26, 36: *Gethsemani*: ("oil press"). See Mk 14, 26 n.

26, 37-39: According to the scriptures, Jesus was in distress because of the imminent crucifixion, not because of a preview of all the sins of men including those for whom he would die in vain. See Heb 8. Since some Catholic theologians maintain that Jesus did not enjoy the beatific vision before and up to his resurrection, it is no longer necessary to reconcile our Lord's profound sadness with his simultaneous enjoyment of the beatific vision (the vision of God enjoyed those in heaven). See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to Gospels.

26, 37: On the favorite three apostles see Mk 5, 37 n.

26, 39b: The most difficult test of obedience of the human will of us to that of God the Father is shown in this Gethsemani scene. It is a classical text to show the two wills in Christ as man and as God. *Father*: see Mk 14, 36 n. *Cup*: the Bible uses cup with many figurative meanings. Among other meanings, cup symbolizes God's blessings for believers, and God's wrath for his enemies. At times, the pious biblical writers speak of the "cup of consolation" and the "cup of suffering" as here in the evangelist's text. See 20, 22 n.

42 weak." Again a second time he went away and prayed, say-
 ing, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink
 43 it, thy will be done." And he came again and found them
 44 sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them he
 went back again, and prayed a third time, saying the same
 45 words over. Then he came to his disciples, and said to them
 "Sleep on now, and take your rest! Behold, the hour is at
 hand when the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands
 46 of sinners. | Rise, let us go. Behold, he who betrays me is
 at hand."

47 *Jesus Arrested* And while he was yet speaking, behold
 Judas, one of the Twelve, came and with him a great crowd
 with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the
 48 people. Now his betrayer had given them a sign, saying,
 49 "Whomever I kiss, that is he; lay hold of him." And he went
 straight to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed him.
 50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, for what purpose hast thou
 come?" Then they came forward and set hands on Jesus and
 took him.

51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached
 out his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the
 52 high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put
 back thy sword into its place; for all those who take the
 53 sword will perish by the sword. Or dost thou suppose that
 I cannot entreat my Father, and he will even now furnish
 54 me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then are
 the Scriptures to be fulfilled, that thus it must take place?"
 55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "As against a robber
 you have come out, with swords and clubs, to seize me. I sat
 daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not lay
 56 hands on me." Now all this was done that the Scriptures

26, 45: *Sleep on now, and take your rest!*: with friendly irony Jesus tells the apostles to continue their sleep now that it is too late to pray with him. The Greek allows another translation, i.e.: Still sleeping? Are you still taking your rest?

26, 47-56: See par Mk 14, 43-52; Lk 22, 47-53; Jn 18, 2-11.

26, 49: *Kissed him*: perhaps Judas thought that Jesus would interpret his kiss as one of repentance. See Lk 7, 45 for another instance of this oriental manner of greeting.

26, 52: Jesus seems to be uttering a proverb and not to make a pronouncement on the right of the state to perform executions.

26, 53: *Twelve legions*: one legion numbered six thousand men.

26, 54: *Scriptures*: "of the prophets" as v. 56 says. See Lk 24, 45-47 n.

26, 55: *In that hour*: equivalent to our "at that minute."

of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

- ⁵⁷ *Jesus before the Sanhedrin* Now those who had taken Jesus led him away to Caiphas the high priest, where the
⁵⁸ Scribes and the elders had gathered together. But Peter was following him at a distance, even to the courtyard of the high priest, and he went in and sat with the attendants to see
⁵⁹ the end. Now the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin were seeking false witness against Jesus, that they might put him
⁶⁰ to death, | but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. But last of all two false witnesses came for-
⁶¹ ward, | and said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it after three days.'"
⁶² Then the high priest, standing up, said to him, "Dost thou make no answer to the things that these men prefer against
⁶³ thee?" | But Jesus kept silence. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us
⁶⁴ whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to

26, 57-68: See par Mk 14, 53-65; Lk 22, 66-71; Jn 18, vv. 13 and 19-24. The data of the events connected with the trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin are: Mt and Mk report a night trial before the Sanhedrin over which Caiphas presided (Mt 26, 57). Mt in 27, 1 and Mk in 15, 1 mention a morning session of the Sanhedrin after which they send Jesus to Pilate. Lk omits any night sessions; he narrates a morning trial before the Sanhedrin (in the same terms as the night trial before Caiphas is told in Mt and Mk). Jn tells of a night inquiry before Annas (Jn 18, 13) on questions (Jn 18, 19-23) dissimilar from those of the trial in Matthew-Mark-Luke. Annas sends Jesus to Caiphas (Jn 18, 24). Nowadays, a common opinion brings the conflicting accounts on the events in chronological sequence as follows: 1. A brief night interrogation before Annas. 2. The mockery of Christ. 3. The denials of Peter. 4. A morning trial before the Sanhedrin over which Caiphas presided. (The *night* trial in Mt and Mk was really the *morning* trial as presented by Lk.) 5. The sending of Jesus to Pilate.

26, 58: *Attendants to see the end*: a suggested translation is: temple police to see what would happen.

26, 51: Jesus did not say that he would destroy the temple of God (v. 61) nor the temple built by man (Mk 14, 58). He said that he would rebuild the temple which they will destroy (Jn 2, 19).

26, 62: *Prefer*: testify.

26, 63-64: Regarding this passage and par Mk 14, 61-62; Lk 22, 66-71, scholars in general understand that the high priest asked Jesus whether he was the Messiah, the adopted son of God, and he answered affirmatively. A less probable view holds that the high priest asked Jesus whether he was the divine Son of God and that Jesus replied affirmatively.

26, 64: Jesus answers that he is the long awaited Messiah ("Son of Man"—see Dn 7, 13f n) who will soon ("hereafter") come on the

him, "Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, here after you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming upon the clouds of heaven."

- 65 Then the high priest tore his garments, saying, "He has blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Be
66 hold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" And they answered and said, "He is liable to death."
67 Then they spat in his face and buffeted him; while others
68 struck his face with the palms of their hands, | saying, "Prophecy to us, O Christ! who is it that struck thee?"

- 69 *Peter's Denial* Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard; and a maidservant came up to him and said, "Thou
70 also wast with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what thou art saying."
71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another maid saw him, and said to those who were there, "This man also
72 was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with
73 an oath, "I do not know the man!" | And after a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely thou
74 also art one of them, for even thy speech betrays thee." Then he began to curse and to swear that he did not know the
75 man. And at that moment a cock crowed. | And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows, thou wilt deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

right hand of God ("the Power"). The position on the right hand includes, in this context, the notion of Messiahship (see 26, 65 n). Peter later uses this expression to signify divinity (see Acts 2, 33 n).

26, 65: Since it was not blasphemous to threaten the destruction of the temple nor to style oneself as the awaited Messiah, scholars have not yet defined in what precisely the blasphemy consisted. True blasphemy had to be an explicit insult to the Divine Name (Lv 24, 16) but the blasphemy does not seem to be in Christ's use of "Power" for the name of God. One probable opinion is: in the eyes of his judges the blasphemy consisted not only in Christ's claiming, in the most absolute terms possible, to be the Messiah (sitting at the right hand and coming on the clouds), but in the lack of a sign from God in support of this claim.

26, 66: *What do you think?*: whatever it may have been that the high priest classified as blasphemy, he seems to be asking for a confirmation of his interpretation. *He is liable to death*: he deserves death. See Mk 14, 64 n.

26, 67-68: See par Mk 14, 65; Lk 22, 63-65 n.

26, 69-75: See par Mk 14, 66-72 n (on the discrepancies); Lk 22, 56-62; Jn 18, 17 n and 18, 25-27.

26, 73: *Speech*: accent.

26, 75: *Before a cock crows . . . three times*: see v. 34.

27

¹ Now when morning came all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel together against Jesus in
² order to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the procurator.

³ *The End of Judas* Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders,
⁴ | saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." But
⁵ they said, "What is that to us? See to it thyself." And he flung the pieces of silver into the temple, and withdrew; and went away and hanged himself with a halter.

⁶ And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said,

27, 1-2: The account of Christ's being delivered up to Pontius Pilate is interrupted by the narration of the Judas event. (V. 11 continues where v. 2 left off.)

27, 1: According to the common opinion (see 26, 57-68 n), this verse refers to the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

27, 2: *Pilate*: see Mk 15, 1 n. *Procurator*: though at times the Greek word is translated "governor," the 1961 discovery of an inscription at Caesarea, where Pilate's headquarters were located, seems to have decided the controversy about his official title. It is said to have been "prefect" (*praefectus*).

27, 3-10: Because of the Sanhedrin's determination to have Jesus executed, Mt most probably considered it appropriate to place the traditional story of the end of Judas here. There were two inspired traditional accounts of the death of Judas. Mt says that the traitor committed suicide by hanging himself (v. 5); Acts says, with no hint of suicide, that Judas died from a fall or a bodily swelling. See Acts 1, 18 n. A common harmonizing opinion explains that Judas hanged himself and died, suffocating from a swelling or a forward fall. Some modern Catholic scholars propose that by "he went and hanged himself" Mt meant: Judas died the characteristic death of a traitor. The scholars reason this way because the evangelist's phrase refers to 2 Sm 17, 23: (Ahitophel) "went . . . and hanged himself." In Jewish tradition, Achitophel, the friend and counselor of David, was the classic example of a traitorous friend. See Jn 13, 18 n. The same scholars furthermore propose: Acts 1, 18 means to say that Judas by "having swollen up" died the characteristic death of a sinner. Acts seems to refer to Wis 4, 19: ". . . he (God) shall strike them (sinners) down speechless and swollen . . ." (the same Greek word as used in Acts). In other words, the two popular traditional accounts are not interested in how Judas died, but in the religious message of his death, which is that he died as a traitor and as a sinner.

27, 3: *Repented*: the remorse he felt did not lead Judas to ask for pardon. *Thirty pieces of silver*: the silver shekel referred to here was called the *argurion*. Thirty shekels amounted to more than three months' wages of a laborer.

27, 5: *Into the temple*: into the temple courtyard.

27, 6: The money could not be used for cultic purposes.

"It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, seeing that 7 it is the price of blood." And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, as a burial 8 place for strangers. For this reason that field has been called 9 even to this day, Haceldama, that is, the Field of Blood. Then what was spoken through Jeremias the prophet was fulfilled, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was priced, upon whom the children of Israel set a price; 10 and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

11 *Jesus before Pilate* Now Jesus stood before the procurator; and the procurator asked him, saying, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "Thou sayest it." | And when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he made 13 no answer. | Then Pilate said to him, "Dost thou not hear 14 how many things they prefer against thee?" But he did not answer him a single word, so that the procurator wondered exceedingly.

27, 7: *Strangers*: foreigners who might die in Jerusalem. The English expression, a "potter's field," for a paupers' cemetery, has its origin here.

27, 8: *To this day*: at the time of the writing, which must have been a long time after the event. *Haceldama, that is*: since this comes from the Latin Bible (Vulgate) not from the original text, it should be deleted.

27, 9-10: This is not a quotation from "Jeremias the prophet," (Jer 32, 6-15) but the buying of a field is couched in a free quotation from Za 11, 12f. Many present-day commentators suggest that the quotation is attributed to Jeremia because he was better known than Zacharia.

27, 9: *Was fulfilled*: contrary to the face-value meaning of this expression, Zacharia did not prophesy that the Messia was to be betrayed for "thirty pieces of silver" but Mt, who wrote when the betrayal by Judas was past history, accommodates Jer 32, 6-15 and Za 11, 12f to the betrayal of Christ by Judas. See Za 11, 11-13 n.

27, 11-26: See par Mk 15, 1-15; Lk 23, vv 2-5 and 13-25; Jn 18, 28-19, 16. The four accounts are structured identically with the three scenes of questioning, condemnation, and flagellation. To the principal scene of Pilate versus the Jews there is subordinated the scene of Christ versus Barabbas. The themes of Jesus the King and the Innocent One permeate the narratives. The theme of King is especially evident in Mk and Jn.

27, 11: *King of the Jews*: see Jn 19, 12 n. *Thou sayest it*: although scholars differ on the exact translation, they generally agree that Jesus preferred to have the procurator specify his meaning of "king of the Jews" before answering.

27, 12: *Chief priests*: see Mk 15, 3 n.

27, 13: *Prefer*: bring.

- 15 Now at festival time the procurator used to release to the
 16 crowd a prisoner, whomever they would. Now he had at that
 17 time a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when
 they had gathered together, Pilate said, "Whom do you wish
 that I release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"
 18 For he knew that they had delivered him up out of envy.
 19 Now, as he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent to
 him saying, "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I
 have suffered many things in a dream today because of him."
 20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to
 21 ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. But the procurator ad-
 dressed them, and said to them, "Which of the two do you
 22 wish that I release to you?" And they said, "Barabbas." | Pi-
 late said to them, "What then am I to do with Jesus who is
 23 called Christ?" | They all said, "Let him be crucified!" The
 procurator said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But
 they kept crying out the more, saying, "Let him be crucified!"
 24 Now Pilate, seeing that he was doing no good, but rather
 that a riot was breaking out, took water and washed his
 hands in sight of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the

27, 15: See Jn 18, 39 n.

27, 16: *A notorious prisoner*: Mk and Lk say he was an insur-
 rectionist and a murderer; Jn says, "a robber"; and Acts 3, 14 "a
 murderer." *Barabbas*: it means "son of the father." There does not
 seem to be enough evidence in the Greek manuscripts to say that his
 full name was Jesus Barabbas.

27, 18: *They*: par Mk 15, 10 specifies that "they" refers to "the
 chief priests."

27, 19: The narrations of the warning of Pilate's wife and of the
 episode of Pilate's washing his hands (v. 24), both peculiar to Mt,
 emphasize the innocence of Christ. *Wife*: in the apocryphal book,
 the *Acts of Pilate*, a Christian legend calls her Procla or Procula and
 presents her as a martyr. On this legendary basis she is venerated as a
 saint in Greek and Abyssinian churches. *I have suffered many things*:
 I have been greatly disturbed. Even though Augustus had forbidden
 procurators to take their wives to the provinces, at least two Roman
 writers mention exceptions to this rule. Mt does not seem to speak
 of Pilate's wife as a prospective Christian nor as a sympathizer with
 the claims of Jesus.

27, 24: *A riot was breaking out*: see Jn 19, 16 n. There was a
 Roman (compare: *Aeneid*, II, 719) and biblical custom (Dt 21,
 6-9) of declaring oneself innocent of a murder by washing in water
 or in the blood of the murdered victim. The scene calls to mind
Macbeth, V, 1. Whereas many scholars, at least implicitly, accept the
 historicity of Pilate's handwashing, others do not, and they adduce
 some general reasons: 1. It was not the custom of Roman officials
 to disclaim juridical responsibilities. 2. It seems farfetched that Pilate
 should perform such a dramatic act in open confession of his weak-
 ness before "colonials." 3. At the time of this writing, the Jewish
 religion was legal throughout the Roman empire, but the new Chris-

25 blood of this just man; see to it yourselves." | And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

26 *The Scourging and Crowning* Then he released to them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to them to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the procurator took Jesus into the praetorium, and gathered together about him the whole cohort. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet cloak 27 | and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head and a reed into his right hand; and bending the knee before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 28 And they spat on him, and took the reed and kept striking him on the head.

29 *The Way of the Cross* And when they had mocked him they took the cloak off him and put his own garments on him

tian religion was liable to persecution. It would have been advantageous to Christians to show their loyalty to the Romans by explaining through this vivid scene that the Jews coerced the reluctant Pilate to pronounce the death penalty.

27, 25: *All the people*: not all the Jews of Jerusalem were culpable of Christ's death, but only a clique of high priests (Sadducees) who instigated the Jerusalem mob. See Jn 19, 16 n. *His blood be on us and on our children*: see the equivalent expression in 3 Kgs 2 33. The people take the responsibility of Christ's death upon themselves and upon their children. Some non-Catholic scholars hold that the evangelist put these words on the lips of the people to underscore the culpability of the Jews (compare 27, 4 n for the third reason). Others assert that these words were added to contrast the reluctance of Pilate with the determination of the Jews to have Christ crucified. Even if these two opinions cannot be well supported it is against God's justice as known in scripture, and beyond the meaning of the text to interpret the age-long persecution of the Jews as a just punishment in fulfillment of a self-imposed curse. Unfortunately this saying became to anti-Semitism the most popular text from the first Christian centuries till modern times.

27, 26: *Delivered*: the same Greek word (*paredoken*) is used in all four parallel passages. See Jn 19, 16 n.

27, 27-31: See par Mk 15, 16-20; Jn 19, 1-3.

27, 27: *The soldiers of the procurator*: since the Second Italian Cohort was stationed in Palestine at this time, this text refers probably to some of the cohort's six hundred men. *Praetorium*: the headquarters of the Roman governor. See Jn 19, 13 n.

27, 28: *Scarlet cloak*: many interpreters believe this to refer to the scarlet cloak of the Roman soldiers.

27, 30: Once a prisoner was condemned to death, the soldiers enjoyed a large measure of freedom to do with him as they wanted. There are parallels to this scene in contemporary writings of the time.

27, 31: According to Roman custom, the condemned walked nakedly to the place of execution. Jesus was spared that humiliation.

³² and led him away to crucify him. Now as they went out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon; him they forced ³³ to take up his cross. And they came to the place called Golgotha, that is, the Place of the Skull.

³⁴ *The Crucifixion* And they gave him wine to drink mixed ³⁵ with gall; but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. And after they had crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots, [to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, "They divided my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast lots."]

^{36,37} And sitting down they kept watch over him. And they put above his head the charge against him, written, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on his ³⁹ right hand and one on his left. Now the passers-by were jeering at him, shaking their heads, | and saying, "Thou who destroyest the temple, and in three days buildest it up again, save thyself! If thou art the Son of God, come down from ⁴¹ the cross!" In like manner, the chief priests with the Scribes ⁴² and the elders, mocking, said, | "He saved others, himself he cannot save! If he is the King of Israel, let him come down ⁴³ now from the cross; and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he wants him; for he said, ⁴⁴ 'I am the Son of God.'" | And the robbers also, who were crucified with him, reproached him in the same way.

⁴⁵ *The Death of Jesus* Now from the sixth hour there was

27, 32-38: See par Mk 15, 21-27; Lk 23, 26-34 and v. 38; Jn 19, 17-24.

27, 32: *A man of Cyrene named Simon*: see Lk 23, 26 n.

27, 33: *Skull*: for the meaning and site see Mk 15, 22 n.

27, 34: See Mk 15, 23 n.

27, 35: *They divided his garments*: see Jn 19, 23-24 n. *To fulfill . . . cast lots*: the words within brackets come from Jn 19, 24.

27, 37: See Jn 19, 19-22 and annotations.

27, 39-44: See par Mk 15, 29-32; Lk 23, 35-37.

27, 40: On the refutation of the accusation about the temple destruction, see 26, 61 n. *The Son of God*: a reference to Christ's assertion before the Sanhedrin. See 26, 63-64 n.

27, 43: See Ps 21, 28-32 n, second paragraph.

27, 45-56: See par Mk 15, 33-41; Lk 23, 44-49.

27, 45: *Sixth hour*: noon. *Ninth hour*: about 3:00 P.M. The "darkness" is frequently interpreted not as a miraculous eclipse of the sun but an obscuring of the sun caused by a hot dust-laden wind called *sirocco*. This phenomenon was not rare in Palestine. Even St. Jerome speaks of a *sirocco* which obscured the sun completely when he was in Bethlehem about the year 398.

- 46 darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. But about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani," that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders on hearing this said, "This man is calling Elias." And immediately one of them ran and, taking a sponge, soaked it in common wine, put it on a reed and offered it to him to drink. | But the rest said, "Wait, let us see whether Elias is coming to save him." But Jesus again cried out with a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.
- 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, | and the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose; | and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection, they came into the holy city,

27, 46: The fourth of the "seven last words" of Christ is not a cry of despair but a cry of agony that God seemed to withdraw from one who could not live except in his love. Although the hostile bystanders must have interpreted this cry as a retraction of Christ's claim that God was with him, yet it was a cry of victory because the cry of "My God" showed that the Father was still with him. See Ps 21, 28-32 n. On the problem of sadness versus the beatific vision see Mt 26, 37-39 n.

27, 47: *This man is calling Elias*: because of this remark, many scholars claim that Jesus actually used the Hebrew form "Eli" (as transcribed in Mt 27, 46) rather than the Aramaic form "Eloi" (as transcribed in Mk 15, 34). On the expectation of the coming of Elias to announce the Messiah see 17, 10-13. The Jews were accustomed to invoke Elias in time of need, just as modern Christians invoke the saints.

27, 48: *Common wine*: this sour wine or vinegar as in Lk 23, 36 and Jn 19, 29 is not the drink mentioned in Mt 27, 34. Some commentators believe that the drink (v. 48) is the "*posca*," a favorite drink of Roman soldiers. Its ingredients were sour wine, water and eggs.

27, 51: *The curtain of the temple*: here and in parallel passages the Greek word for "curtain," which is traditionally called "veil," is used. In the Greek Old Testament it meant the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Ex 26, 33). In the light of various texts in the Epistle to the Hebrews (e.g., 10, 19-22) many scholars interpret the tearing of the veil as a symbolism of the free access to God and reconciliation with him. Only the high priest previously had access to the Holy of Holies. Since the same Greek word is also used for the veil covering the entrance to the Holy Place (Ex 27, 16) other scholars, because of Christ's death, understand the tearing of the veil as the symbol of the end of the Old Testament temple and cult. Since the three partitions in Herod's temple are the same as in the temple of Solomon, see the chart of the latter in Vol. 1, p. 576.

27, 51b-53: Besides the tearing of the temple veil mentioned also in Mk and Lk, Mt adds four other phenomena. Of the relatively few Christian commentators attempting to interpret this baffling passage,

³⁴ and appeared to many. Now when the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, they were very much afraid, and they said, "Truly he was the Son of God."

³⁵ And many women were there, looking on from a distance, who

³⁶ had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

³⁷ *The Burial* Now when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, Joseph by name, who was him-

³⁸ self a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered the body to be given up.

³⁹ And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it in a clean linen

⁶⁰ cloth, and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. Then he rolled a large stone to the entrance of

⁶¹ the tomb, and departed. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

⁶² *Precautions of the Chief Priests* And the next day, which was the one after the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and

some understand it literally and others symbolically. Both opinions admit that the earthquake with its accompanying cracking of rocks is loosely connected with a number of Old Testament texts (such as Am 8, 8-10). The resurrection is related to the vision of Ezechiel (Ez 37). One of the most common symbolic interpretations is: Jesus vanquished the power of death and thereby the time of judgment for all men, including the dead, has come. The literal interpreters of these events are faced with the following questions to which they give no adequate answer: 1. If it is granted that those "who had fallen asleep" did not merely appear (v. 53) but had really arisen from death, were they only some or all of the holy people of Old Testament times? 2. Did the resurrected people live on earth till Christ's ascension, or did they continue living (as Lazarus and others whom Christ restored to life) even after his ascension? 3. Does the evangelist mean to say that the people came back to life not when Christ died but "after his resurrection" (v. 53), so that Christ would be chronologically the first to arise from death, according to 1 Cor 15, 20?

27, 54: *Son of God*: see Mk 15, 39 n.

27, 56: *Mary the mother of James and Joseph*: most probably the same as "the mother of James" (Mk 16, 1).

27, 57-61: See par Mk 15, 42-47; Lk 23, 50-56; Jn 19, 38-42. If Joseph (of Arimathea) had not taken the body it would have been buried in a common grave with the two thieves.

27, 61: *The other Mary*: see 28, 1 n.

27, 62: *Next day*: the Sabbath.

63 the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate, | saying, "Sir, we have remembered how that deceiver said, while he was yet
64 alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Give orders, therefore, that the sepulchre be guarded until the third day, or else his disciples may come and steal him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead'; and the last imposture will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have
65 a guard; go, guard it as well as you know how." So they went and made the sepulchre secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

28

1 *The Women at the Grave* Now late in the night of the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary
2 Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and drawing near rolled back
3 the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment like snow. And for fear of him the
4 guards were terrified, and became like dead men. | But the angel spoke and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for
5 I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here for he has risen even as he said. Come, see the place where
6 the Lord was laid. | And go quickly, tell his disciples that he has risen; and behold, he goes before you into Galilee; there

27, 63: *After three days I will rise again*: a reference to Jonah (Mt 12, 40).

27, 64: "The last imposture," the claim of resurrection, would be worse than "the first," which was "stirring up the people" by his teaching (Lk 23, 5).

27, 65: *Pilate*: the only classical Roman writing extant in which the death of Jesus under Pilate is mentioned is the history by Tacitus. *You have a guard*: this literal translation from the Greek means "Here is a guard." Pilate grants their request and gives them a guard, most probably of Roman soldiers.

27, 66: *Sealing the stone*: see Dn 6, 18 n.

28, 1-10: See par Mk 16, 1-8; Lk 24, 1-11.

28, 1: *Now late in the night of the Sabbath*: the Greek reads "After the Sabbath." *First day*: Sunday. *The other Mary*: "the mother of James" according to par Mk 16, 1 and Lk 24, 10.

28, 2-4: According to a minority opinion of Catholic interpreters the earthquake and the angel are only symbolic ways of expressing the glorious events of Christ's resurrection.

28, 6-7: *He has risen . . . he has risen*: in Greek, "He has been raised," by God. *As he said*: a reference to Christ's prophecy of his resurrection (Mt 26, 32).

you shall see him. Behold, I have foretold it to you." |
 8 And they departed quickly from the tomb in fear and great
 9 joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them,
 saying, "Hail!" And they came up and embraced his feet and
 10 worshipped him. | Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be
 afraid; go, take word to my brethren that they are to set out
 for Galilee; there they shall see me."

11 *The Guards and the Chief Priests* Now while they were
 going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and re-
 12 ported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when
 they had assembled with the elders and had consulted to-
 13 gether, they gave much money to the soldiers, telling them,
 "Say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him while we
 14 were sleeping.' And if the procurator hears of this, we will
 15 persuade him and keep you out of trouble." And they took
 the money, and did as they were instructed; and this story has
 been spread abroad among the Jews even to the present day.

16 *Commission of the Apostles* But the eleven disciples went
 into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them to

28, 9: Here Jesus appears for the first time, but according to Jn 20, 14-18 the first appearance of Jesus was not to the apostles but only to Mary Magdalene on her second visit to the tomb (her first visit is narrated in Jn 20, 1). Mary is also among the women mentioned here in v. 9 as v. 1 clearly indicates her presence. One explanation of this discrepancy is that Mt 28, 9-10 gives a summary of Jn 20, 14-18 where only the particulars pertaining to Mary Magdalene are told. *They . . . embraced his feet*: an expression of veneration (see 4 Kgs 4, 27).

28, 10: *Take word to my brethren*: Christ's words seem superfluous since the women were already disposed to do so ("and ran to tell his disciples"—v. 3).

28, 11: *All that had happened*: the guards reported the earthquake and the removal of the stone (v. 2) but not that they had seen the risen Christ. He appeared only to a select few (according to Acts 10, 41).

28, 13: *Say*: to the people. The counsel of the chief priests is not intelligent because, among other reasons, if the soldiers were sleeping how would they have known that the *disciples* stole the body?

28, 15: *This story*: the story that the disciples stole Christ's body (v. 13). *To the present day*: this was written about half a century after the event.

28, 16-20: The disciples follow the women's instructions to go to Galilee (v. 10). The "mountain" (v. 1) remains indefinite as well as the time when the disciples went to Galilee. In addition, Mt leaves the reader uncertain as to what happened to Jesus after his command (v. 20).

17 go. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some
18 doubted. And Jesus drew near and spoke to them saying, "All
19 power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go,
therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy
20 Spirit, | teaching them to observe all that I have commanded
you; and behold, I am with you all days, even unto the con-
summation of the world."

28, 17: *Worshipped*: paid homage. *Doubted*: since Mt mentions only one apparition of Christ to his disciples, the evangelist may be referring to previous times when the apostles doubted our Lord's resurrection (Mk 16, 14).

28, 19: Some modern Catholic scholars suppose that the early Christians used the short baptismal formula "in Jesus' name," or its equivalent. (See Acts 2, 38; 19, 5; 22, 16). Only later did the full trinitarian formula appear (Mt 28, 19). Yet, whenever the first Christians used "in Jesus' name" for baptism, they implicitly acknowledged the Father and the Holy Spirit. In other words, when Mt put the full trinitarian formula on Christ's lips (perhaps the liturgy used it that way in the evangelist's day), the Father and the Holy Spirit who were implicit in the earlier short formula became explicit. This is only a probable theory because it may be that to baptize "in Jesus' name" refers to the meaning of the ritual and not to the ritual formula itself.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

INTRODUCTION

The evangelist of the second Gospel had a double name. He was called John Mark. The first name was Jewish, the second Roman. Mark was probably the son of a certain Mary at whose house in Jerusalem the first Christians often met (Acts 12, 12). Mark's cousin was Barnabas, a Cypriote (Col 4, 10). Acts 12—15 inform us that Mark and Barnabas accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. It is not clear what kind of work Mark performed. Were his duties to care for room and board, to make travel arrangements, assist at baptisms, or was he a catechist having the foremost duty to give instructions? Perhaps he was both a travel secretary and a catechist.

It is unlikely that Mark knew our Lord, even though Mark was Peter's disciple (1 Pt 5, 13). It is still more unlikely that the evangelist was one of the seventy-two disciples. There is no certainty whatsoever about the end of Mark's life. Eusebius, the first ecclesiastical historian, calls the evangelist the founder and first bishop of the Church in Alexandria, Egypt. These statements cannot be proven historically.

The biography of Mark is not as impressive as his inspired and immortal Gospel. Following the information of Irenaeus, the second Gospel is often dated from between 64 A.D. when Peter was probably martyred, and 70 A.D. when Jerusalem fell to the Romans. Traditionally, Rome has been named as the place of composition and Mark's readers have been described as non-Jewish people living outside of Palestine. These details may have been deduced from Mark's frequent Latin idioms and his explanations of Aramaic terms and Jewish customs.

Since early writers, among them Papias, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, call Mark the faithful interpreter of St. Peter, the "Rock" may be regarded as one source used by Mark for composing his Gospel. It is interesting to note that Peter is described more clearly by Mark than by the other three Gospel writers. Besides Peter, other sources used were oral and written tradition.

Many experts have come to the conclusion that Mark's narrative style is homespun when he is writing on his own but vivid when he reports testimony of Peter and others. (Taking the Gospel as a whole, its style is inferior to some parts of the third Gospel, to the Acts, Hebrews, and other epistles.) Whenever Mark uses incomplete pieces of tradition not traceable to sources, the evangelist's own narrative construction appears unfavorably. Yet when he relates the testimony of others, their narratives are complete in themselves. To

the relating or "reporting" facet of his style belong the vivid details graphic expressions and descriptions of the emotional reactions of various people. To the homespun facet belong the abrupt beginning of a narrative, numerous parenthetical remarks, uneven sentence structure and repetitions of words and phrases. (Mark uses a total of 1,270 words exclusive of proper names.) Most notorious is his frequent use of "and" (in Greek, *kai*). See, for instance, 3, 14-18. To illustrate the two facets of Mark's style, compare his account of the transfiguration in 9, 2-8 (where he is probably reporting from Peter's testimony) with the appointment of the twelve apostles in 3, 13-19 (where he seems to rely on a fragmentary piece of tradition).

A valuable finding emerges from the study of Mark's style, namely: wherever the second evangelist owes his vivid narratives to someone's testimony and not to his own art as a writer, he is handing down a tradition as he found it and he thereby heightens the historical worth of that tradition.

The division of Mark's Gospel is the least defined of all four Gospels. It is not without reason that his is called the most casual of the Gospels.

In the introduction (1, 1-13) Mark announces the purpose or theme of his whole work: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (v. 1). This is Mark's veiled affirmation of his belief that Jesus is divine. In affirming his own belief that Jesus is God's Son, Mark's purpose is not marred by his being less systematic than Matthew in citing Old Testament texts to prove Christ's divine Sonship. Neither does his purpose suffer from etching most vividly the human Christ with almost every human emotion.

It is generally agreed that Mark divides our Lord's public ministry into two parts. The first part (1, 14-8, 26) on the Galilean ministry, is a closely packed catalogue of miracles showing that Jesus is the Messiah, but Mark painstakingly avoids saying so. In other words, part one contains the famous problem of the Messianic secret: Christ's concealment of the facts that he is the Messiah and that he is divine. It is undeniable that Jesus keeps the Messianic secret because he hides his identity from the demons (1, 34); from those miraculously cured (5, 43); from his followers (8, 30). The reader of Mark's Gospel receives the impression that everyone is asking, "Who is he?" The question is finally answered by Peter at Caesarea Philippi, "Thou art the Christ," i.e., the Messiah (8, 29). Mark stresses the Messianic secret more than the other three evangelists.

It is clear that Mark presents the secret but the interpretation of the secret varies. Many understand it as a means of our Lord's pedagogy. Jesus did not want to swell the Jewish hope for a political Messiah, and so he did not betray his secret for a long time. Perhaps the more basic reason for the Messianic secret is this: had Jesus revealed his divinity from the beginning, his teaching would have blinded the unprepared Jews whose traditions were rooted in almost 2,000 years of belief in *one* God. Therefore, Jesus only

slowly refined to a more spiritual idea their notion of a political Messiah. Through the resurrection, and after Pentecost, our Lord finally revealed his divinity.

Some scholars think that Mark's systematic, not falsified, presentation of the Messianic secret may be a reflection of Peter's personal experience in growing into the understanding of Jesus—from friend to Messiah, to God.

The second part of the Gospel (8, 27—13, 37) extends from the end of the Galilean ministry to the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem which begins with Peter's acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi. This forms the turning point of the Gospel. After this episode Jesus focuses on training his disciples and, lastly, revealing to them who he really is.

The passion and resurrection (chs. 14—16) comprise the final division of Mark's masterpiece. Since this section contains seventy per cent of all the verses in the Gospel, it has been called "a passion narrative with an introduction."

In the first Christian centuries Mark's Gospel was the least commented on. In the fifth century there was only one commentary on Mark. The explanation may well be that preachers found all that Mark said, and more, in Matthew and Luke.

Passages of Mark's Gospel are used in the *Roman Missal* only thirty-two times, six of them for Communion verses. The other three Gospels are used more frequently.

Main divisions of the Gospel of St. Mark are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-13
2. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee, 1, 14—8, 26
3. From the End of the Galilean Ministry to the Ministry in Jerusalem 8, 27—13, 37
4. The Passion and Resurrection Narrative, 14—16

I. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

1

1

1 The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of
2 God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

John the Baptist "Behold, I send my messenger before
3 thee, who shall prepare thy way, | the voice of one crying in
the desert, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make straight
4 his paths,' " | there came John in the desert, baptizing and
preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
5 And all the country of Judea went out to him, and all the in-
habitants of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in
6 the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed
in camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins, and he
7 ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, | "One
mightier than I is coming after me, the strap of whose san-
8 dals I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I have bap-
tized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy
Spirit."

9 *The Baptism of Jesus* And it came to pass in those days,
that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by
10 John in the Jordan. And immediately on coming up from the
water he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit, as a dove,
11 descending and remaining upon him. And there came a voice
from the heavens, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am
well pleased."

12 *The Temptation* And immediately the Spirit drove him

1—6: There is no satisfactory solution to the order of events de-
scribed in these chapters and in Mt 3—13.

1, 1-8: See par Mt 3, 1-12.

1, 1: See division in the Introduction to this Gospel.

1, 2-3: See Is 40, 3-5 n.

1, 4: *Desert*: see Mt 3, 1 n. *A baptism of repentance*: see Mt 3,
2 n.

1, 6: See Mt 3, 4 n.

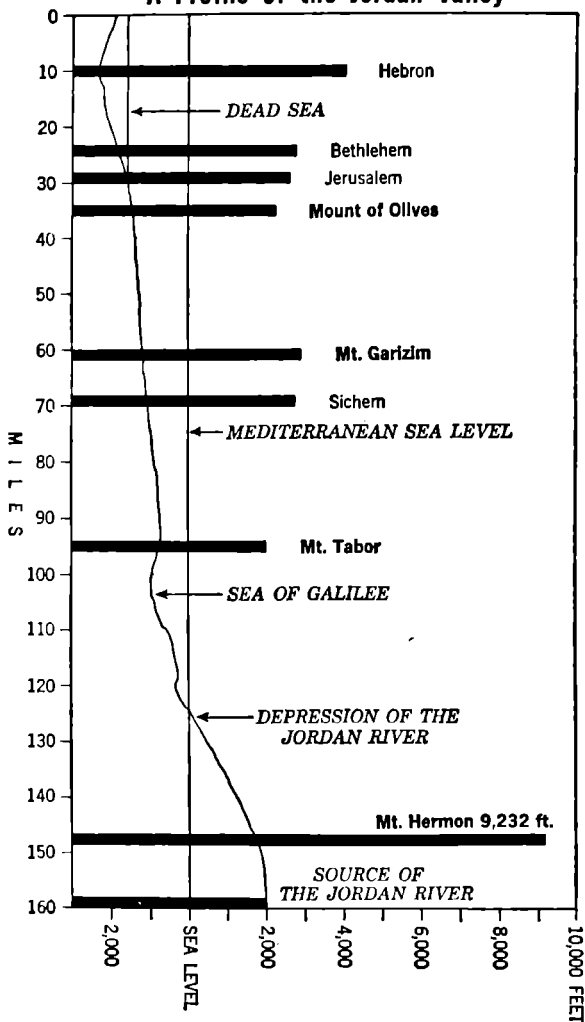
1, 8: See Mt 3, 11-12 n.

1, 9-11: For par see Mt 3, 13-17 n.

1, 10-11: See Mt 3, 16-17 n and 3, 17 n.

1, 12-13: For par see Mt 4, 1-11 n.

A Profile of the Jordan Valley



- 13 forth into the desert. And he was in the desert forty days and forty nights, being tempted the while by Satan, and with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

2

- 14 *In Galilee* And after John had been delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel."
- 16 *The First Disciples Called* And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew, casting their nets into the sea (for they were fishermen). And Jesus said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And at once they left the nets, and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; they also were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them. And they left the father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.
- 21 And they entered Capernaum. And immediately on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach.

1, 13: *Forty*: see Mt 4, 2 n. *Was with the wild beasts*: many Bible experts interpret this as a picturesque detail. One of the several other equally probable interpretations is that the animals symbolize the withdrawal of Jesus from people.

1, 14-15: See par Mt 4, 12-17.

1, 15: The "kingdom of God" is spoken of as already present (see Mt 3, 2 n).

1, 16-20: It is disputed whether the call of the disciples in this passage (or the par Mt 4, 18-22) and Lk 5, 1-11 are two different events or one event handed down according to two different traditions. (Non-Catholics give variant opinions, which range from an account that ultimately rested on Peter's reminiscences to the telling of a fabricated story.)

Since Jn 21, 1-14 and Lk 5, 1-11 have only two similarities in common, the unfruitful all-night fishing and the extraordinary catch at the command of Jesus, these two narratives are usually considered to represent two distinct episodes.

1, 17: *Fishers of men*: there is no parallel in the Bible to this figure of speech, except that it is used in Jer 16, 16 where the sending of fishermen (and hunters) means God's threat to punish Israel. In the Bible the figure of the fisherman gave way to the more popular figure of the shepherd.

1, 18: Many experts judge from Jn 1, 35-42 that Simon (Peter) and Andrew had already met Jesus.

1, 20: The Gospel of Mark stresses the idea of following Christ.

1, 21-28: See par Lk 4, 31-37 n.

22 them. And they were astonished at his teaching; for he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.

23 *The Cure of a Demoniac* Now in their synagogue there was a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, |
24 saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Hast thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the
25 Holy One of God." And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold
26 thy peace, and go out of the man." | And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, went out
27 of him. And they were all amazed, so that they inquired among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commands even the unclean
28 spirits, and they obey him." And rumor concerning him went forth immediately into all the region round about Galilee.

29 *Peter's Mother-in-law* And as soon as they came out of the synagogue, they, with James and John, came to the house
30 of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law was keeping her bed sick with a fever, and they immediately told him
31 about her. And drawing near, he took her by the hand and raised her up; and the fever left her at once, and she began to wait on them.

32 *Other Miracles* Now when it was evening, and the sun had set, they brought to him all who were ill and who were
33 possessed. And the whole town had gathered together at the
34 door. And he cured many who were afflicted with various diseases, and cast out many devils; and he did not permit them to speak, because they knew him.

35 And rising up long before daybreak, he went out and departed into a desert place, and there he prayed. And Simon,
36 and those who were with him, followed him. | And they found him and said to him, "They are all seeking thee."

1, 22: *Having authority*: from God. *Not as the Scribes*: who taught on the authority of "scribal" tradition.

1, 24: *The Holy One of God*: see Lk 4, 34 n.

1, 29-31: Since the narrative seems to be told from Peter's viewpoint, many commentators believe the story ultimately derives from him. See 8, 14-15 n.

1, 32-34: For par see Mt 8, 16-17 n.

1, 34: *He did not permit them to speak*: see the Messianic secret in the Introduction to this Gospel.

1, 35-39: See par Lk 4, 42-44.

38 And he said to them, "Let us go into the neighboring villages and towns, that there also I may preach. For this is why
39 I have come." And he was preaching in their synagogues, and throughout all Galilee, and casting out devils.

40 *A Leper* And a leper came to him, entreating him; and kneeling down he said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me
41 clean." And Jesus, having compassion on him, stretched forth his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be thou
42 made clean." And when he had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. Then he strictly
43 charged him, and immediately drove him away. And he said to him, "See thou tell no one; but go, show thyself to the high priest, and offer for thy purification the things that
44 Moses commanded, for a witness to them." But he went out, and began to publish and to spread abroad the fact, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but remained outside in desert places. And they kept coming to him from every direction.

2

1 *A Paralytic at Capharnaum* And after some days, he again
2 entered Capharnaum | and it was reported that he was at home. And many gathered together, so that there was no
3 longer room, not even around the door. And he spoke the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic,
4 carried by four. And since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they stripped off the roof where he was, and, having made an opening, they let down the pallet
5 on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."
6 Now some of the Scribes were sitting there and reason-

1, 38: *This is why I have come*: Jesus speaks about his Messianic mission for the first time: he must preach ceaselessly. Although the crowds are captivated by his miracles, Jesus seems to assign to the miracles merely the subordinate role of lending authority to his preaching (vv. 37-39).

1, 40-45: See par Mt 8, 1-4.

1, 40: *Leper*: see Mt 8, 2 n.

1, 44: See Mt 8, 4 n.

2, 1-12: For par see Mt 9, 1-8 n.

2, 1: *Again*: a favorite word of Mk. It is used twenty-eight times.
2, 2-4: In the vivid details painted in local colors many form critics sense that the story ultimately goes back to some eyewitnesses.

7 ing in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? He
 8 blasphemes. Who can forgive sins, but only God?" And at
 once Jesus, knowing in his spirit that they so reasoned within
 themselves, said to them, "Why are you arguing these things
 9 in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Thy
 sins are forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up thy pal-
 10 let, and walk'? | But that you may know that the Son of Man
 has power on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic
 11 — | "I say to thee, arise, take up thy pallet, and go to thy
 12 house." And immediately he arose and, taking up his pallet,
 went forth in the sight of all, so that they were all amazed,
 and glorified God, saying, "Never did we see the like."

13 *The Call of Levi* And he went forth again by the water's
 edge, and all the crowd kept coming to him, and he taught
 14 them. And as he was passing along, he saw Levi, the son of
 Alpheus, sitting in the tax-collector's place, and he said to
 15 him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him. And it
 came to pass as he was at table in Levi's house, that many
 publicans and sinners were at table with Jesus and his disci-
 16 ples, for there were many and they also followed him. And
 the Scribes and the Pharisees, seeing that he ate with sinners
 and publicans, said to his disciples, "Why does your master
 17 eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" And Jesus heard
 this, and said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a
 physician, but they who are sick. For I have not come to call
 the just, but sinners."

18 *The Question of Fasting* And the disciples of John and the
 Pharisees were fasting. And they came, and said to him,
 "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast,

2, 7: See Mt 9, 3-7 n.

2, 10: *Son of Man*: see Mt 9, 6 n.

2, 13-17: See par Mt 9, 9-13.

2, 14: See Lk 5, 27-28 n.

2, 15: *Publicans*: the Greek word literally means tax-collectors. Because the Latin Bible (Vulgate) translated tax-collector into *publicanus*, we are more familiar in English with "publican." In reality those who contracted with the Romans for a certain taxable territory were the "publicans"; those who actually did the collecting from the people were the "tax-collectors," such as Matthew (or Levi). Even Latin writers mention their greed.

2, 16: For the artificial setting see Mt 9, 11 n.

2, 18-22: See par Mt 9, 14-17.

2, 18: *Fast*: see Mt 9, 14 n.

19 whereas thy disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast as long as the bridegroom is
20 with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast on
21 that day. No one sews a patch of raw cloth on an old garment; else the new patch tears away from the old, and a
22 worse rent is made. And no one pours new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is spilt, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh skins."

23 *The Disciples Pluck Grain on the Sabbath* And it came to pass again as he was going through the standing grain on the Sabbath, that his disciples began, as they went along, to
24 pluck the ears of grain. But the Pharisees said to him, "Behold, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
25 | And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and those who were with him were in need,
26 and hungry? | how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the loaves of proposition, which he could not lawfully eat, but only the priests? and how he
27 gave them to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for
28 the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

3

1 *A Man with a Withered Hand* And again he entered the synagogue. And a man with a withered hand was there.
2 And they were watching him, whether he cured on the Sab-
3 bath, that they might accuse him. And he said to the man
4 with the withered hand, "Stand forth in the midst." And he

2, 19: *Bridegroom*: see Mt 9, 15 n.

2, 21-22: See Mt 9, 16-17 n on these two parables.

2, 23-28: See par Mt 12, 1-8. Since from an early date the Christians observed the first day of the week as Sunday, the stories on the Sabbath were bound to be remembered and related.

2, 25-26: A reference to 1 Sm 21, 1-6 where the high priest mentioned is Achimelech not Abiathar.

2, 27: This broad-minded interpretation of Old Testament laws is typical of Jesus throughout the Gospels.

2, 28: See Mt 12, 8 n.

3, 1-6: For par see Mt 12, 9-14 n.

3, 4: See Mt 12, 10 n.

said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil? to save a life, or to destroy it?" But they kept silence. And looking round upon them with anger, and being grieved at the blindness of their hearts, he said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand." And he stretched it forth, and his hand was restored. But the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might do away with him.

7 The Mercy of Jesus And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea; and there followed him a large crowd from Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond the Jordan. And of those about Tyre and Sidon, a large crowd, hearing what he was doing, came to him. And he told his disciples to have a small boat in readiness for him, because of the crowd, lest they should throng him. For he healed many, so that as many as had ailments were pressing upon him to touch him. And the unclean spirits, whenever they beheld him, fell down before him and cried out, saying, "Thou art the Son of God." And he charged them strictly not to make him known.

13 The Choice of the Twelve And going up a mountain, he called to him men of his own choosing, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach. To them he gave power to cure sicknesses and to cast out devils. There were Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter;] and James the

3, 5: *Anger . . . grieved*: while Mt and Lk omit this emotional aspect, it is customary for Mk to include it.

3, 6: *Herodians*: see the end of the Introduction to the New Testament.

3, 7-12: See par Lk 6, 17-19. This canvas-like sketch contrasts the enthusiastic effect exerted by the miracles of Jesus (rather than his preaching) over the crowds with the mounting opposition related in the preceding episodes.

3, 7: *The sea*: of Galilee.

3, 8: *Idumea*: the Edom of the Old Testament.

3, 10: *To touch him*: see the primitive belief explained in Mt 9, 21 n.

3, 11: *The unclean spirits*: they are spoken of as if being identical with the persons whom they possess, but only the spirits, not the possessed, knew who Jesus was: "the Son of God" (v. 12). See Mt 8, 29 n.

3, 13-19: "And" is used fifteen times. Compare E. Hemingway's use of "and," e.g., in *Farewell to Arms*.

3, 16-19: It is a fact for us, and perhaps it also was for the early

17 son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (these he sur-
 18 named Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); and Andrew,
 and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and
 James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the
 19 Cananean, | and Judas Iscariot, he who betrayed him.

3

20 *Blasphemy of the Scribes* And they came to the house,
 and again a crowd gathered so that they could not so much
 21 as take their food. But when his own people had heard of it,
 they went out to lay hold of him, for they said, "He has
 22 gone mad." And the Scribes who had come down from
 Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the prince
 23 of devils he casts out devils." And he called them to-
 gether, and said to them in parables, "How can Satan
 24 cast out Satan? And if a kingdom is divided against itself,
 25 that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided
 26 against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan has
 risen up against himself, he is divided, and cannot stand,
 27 but is at an end. But no one can enter the strong man's
 house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong
 man. Then he will plunder his house.
 28 "Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven to
 the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they
 29 may blaspheme; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy
 Spirit never has forgiveness, but will be guilty of an ever-
 30 lasting sin." For they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 *Jesus and His Brethren* And his mother and his brethren

Christians that the number Twelve is better known than some individual names. See table The Twelve Apostles, p. 157.

3, 17: *Boanerges*: see 7, 34 n.

3, 20-21: Mt and Lk omit this episode. It has an authentic ring because the early Christians would hardly have fabricated this unflattering account.

3, 21: *His own people*: not his followers or friends, but his family. *Mad*: not in the technical sense of insane, but much like our colloquial, "he is crazy."

3, 22-27: See par Mt 12, 22-30.

3, 22: *Beelzebub*: see Mt 12, 24 n.

3, 27: *Strong man's house . . . goods*: see Mt 12, 29 n.

3, 28-29: See Mt 12, 31-32 n for the blasphemy.

3, 31-35: For par see Mt 12, 46-50 n.

3, 31: *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers." See Mt 13, 55-56 n. It is generally understood that St. Joseph was dead by that time because he is not mentioned here nor in 6, 3.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Mt 10, 2-4	Mk 3, 16-19	Lk 6, 14-16	Acts 1, 13
Simon } Brothers Andrew } (Mt 4, 18)	Simon James	Simon Andrew	Peter John
James } Brothers; sons John } of Zebedee (Mt 4, 21) (Evangelist)	John Andrew	James John	James Andrew
Phillip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew (Evangelist)	Phillip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Phillip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Phillip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew
*James (of Alphaeus) Thaddeus (Jude)	James Thaddeus (Jude)	James Simon	James Simon ("the Zealot")
Simon Judas	Simon Judas	Jude Judas	Jude (Matthias)

The four columns of the above table contain the same names since it is generally conceded that Thaddeus is another name for Jude. The order of names differs in each column, excepting the following that are always in the same position: St. Peter (Simon) is first; Philip fifth; James ninth; Judas, the traitor, last, except in Acts where the list refers to the time after his death. Furthermore, a close inspection into each of the three groups of four will reveal that the same four apostles are found in each group but in a different order. There is no adequate explanation to date on why these four lists have come down to us in the present mold.

* (James of Alphaeus). James the "son of Mary" (Mt 27, 56; Mk 15, 40; 16, 1; Lk 24, 10) is almost certainly the same person as James the "brother of the Lord," i.e., James the Less, the first bishop of Jerusalem. It remains a disputed question, however, whether this James, the brother of the Lord, is the same person as James of Alphaeus. (See Introduction to the Epistle of St. James.)

came, and standing outside, they sent to him, calling him.
 32 Now a crowd was sitting about him, and they said to him,
 "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren are outside, seeking
 33 thee." | And he answered and said to them, "Who are my
 34 mother and my brethren?" And looking round on those who
 were sitting about him, he said, "Behold my mother and my
 35 brethren. For whoever does the will of God, he is my
 brother and sister and mother."

4

1 *Parable of the Sower* - And again he began to teach by the
 water's edge. And as a great crowd gathered about him,
 he got into a boat and sat on board. And all the crowd
 remained on land facing the sea.

2 And he taught them many things in parables, and he
 3 said to them in his instruction, "Hear! Behold, the sower
 4 went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by
 5 the wayside, and the birds came and ate it up. And other
 seed fell upon rocky ground, where it had not much earth;
 and it sprang up at once, because it had no depth of earth;
 6 | but when the sun rose it was scorched, and because it had
 7 no root it withered away. And other seed fell among thorns;
 and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no
 8 fruit. And other seed fell upon good ground, and yielded
 fruit that grew up, made increase and produced, one thirty,
 9 another sixty, and another a hundredfold." Then he said,
 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 And when he was alone, those who were with him and
 11 the Twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to
 them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the
 kingdom of God; but to those outside, all things are treated
 12 in parables, | that 'Seeing they may see, but not perceive;

3, 32: In all likelihood the message was orally passed on till it reached Jesus.

4, 1-20: See Mt 13, 1-23. Many believe that Mk's version is a literal translation from an Aramaic account.

4, 2: *Parables*: see definition of parable in Mt 13, 3 n.

4, 3-8: See Mt 13, 3-9 n.

4, 4: In Palestine, sowing preceded plowing.

4, 9: *A hundredfold*: see Mt 13, 8 n.

4, 10-12: See Mt 13, 10-15 n.

4, 11: *It is given*: a Hebrew expression to avoid the use of the sacred name of God. In this verse the expression ("it is given") is used for God who gives the mystery and who is the subject in the sentence "To you GOD makes known the mystery. . . ."

and hearing they may hear, but not understand; lest perhaps at any time they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them."

13 And he said to them, "Do you not know this parable?
14 How then will you understand all the parables? | The sower
15 sows the word. And those by the wayside are they in
whom the word is sown; as soon as they have heard,
Satan at once comes and takes away the word that has
16 been sown in their hearts. And those likewise who are
sown on the rocky ground are they who, when they have
17 heard the word, receive it immediately with joy; | and they
have no root in themselves, but continue only for a time;
then, when trouble and persecution come because of the
18 word, they at once fall away. And those who are sown
19 among the thorns are they who listen to the word; | but
the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and
the desires about other things, entering in, choke the word,
20 and it is made fruitless. And those who are sown upon
good ground are they who hear the word, and welcome it,
and yield fruit, one thirty, another sixty, and another a
hundredfold."

21 **Purpose of This Teaching** And he said to them, "Is a lamp
brought to be put under the measure, or under the couch? Is
22 it not rather to be put upon the lamp-stand? For there is
nothing hidden that will not be made manifest; nor is any-
23 thing concealed that will not come to light. If anyone has ears
24 to hear, let him hear." And he said to them, "Take heed
what you hear. With what measure you measure, it shall
25 be measured to you, and more shall be given to you. For
to him who has shall be given; and from him who does not
have, even that which he has shall be taken away."

4, 14: *The word*: used in the sense of "the Gospel."

4, 21-25: See par Lk 8, 16-18. There is more agreement on the connection of these verses with the preceding parable than on their original literary source. The connection may be that Jesus wants the kingdom so well known as is the fact that a lamp diffuses light. Besides, our Lord warns (vv. 24-25) that God judges men by the amount of truth they have; and he who has truth will receive more, but he who has little will lose even that amount if he does not make use of it.

4, 24: *With what measure*: in Mt 7, 2 this saying of Jesus is used in judging others.

4, 25: The meaning is about the same as in Mt 25, 29.

26 *Seed Grows of Itself* And he said, "Thus is the kingdom of
 27 God, as though a man should cast seed into the earth, then
 sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should sprout
 28 and grow without his knowing it. For of itself the earth
 bears the crop, first the blade, then the ear, then the
 29 full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately
 he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come."

30 *The Mustard Seed* And he said, "To what shall we liken
 the kingdom of God; or to what parable shall we compare it?
 31 It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon
 32 the earth, is the smallest of all the seeds upon the earth, | yet
 when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than any
 herb, and puts out great branches, so that the birds of the
 air can dwell beneath its shade."
 33 And in many such parables he spoke the word to them,
 34 according as they were able to understand it; but without
 a parable he did not speak to them. But privately he ex-
 plained all things to his disciples.

35 *The Storm on the Lake* And he said to them on that day,
 when evening had come, "Let us cross over to the other
 36 side." And sending away the crowd, they took him just as he
 was, in the boat; and there were other boats with him.
 37 And there arose a great squall, and the waves were beating
 38 into the boat, so that the boat was now filling. And he
 himself was in the stern of the boat, on the cushion, asleep.
 And they woke him and said to him, "Master, does it not
 39 concern thee that we are perishing?" Then rising up, he
 rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!"

4, 26-29: Only in this Gospel. Of about six probable opinions on the *fundamental* meaning of this parable we give two here: 1. After the long history of Old Testament times, God's kingdom has arrived among men. 2. The final end of the kingdom will come after the patient waiting of the just, like the harvest comes after the farmer's patient waiting.

4, 27: *Then sleep . . . day*: the meaning is: while the man retires at night and arises at dawn, the seed sprouts and grows.

4, 30-32: For par see Mt 13, 31-32 n.

4, 32: See Mt 13, 12 n.

4, 33-34: See par Mt 13, 34-35.

4, 35-40: For par see Mt 8, 23-27 n.

4, 37: *A great squall*: see Mt 8, 24 n.

4, 38: *Master . . . perishing*: this saying is softened in the parallel versions.

40 And the wind fell and there came a great calm. And he said to them, "Why are you fearful? Are you still without faith?" And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, "Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

5

1 *Expulsion of the Devils in Gerasa* And they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes;
 2 | and as soon as he stepped out of the boat, there met him
 3 from the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. This man lived in the tombs and no one could any longer bind him, even
 4 with chains; for often he had been bound with fetters and chains, and he had rent the chains asunder and broken the fetters into pieces. And no one was able to control him.
 5 And constantly, night and day, he was in the tombs and on the mountains, howling and gashing himself with stones.
 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped
 7 him, | and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God?
 8 I adjure thee by God, do not torment me!" | For he was saying to him, "Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit."
 9 And he asked him, "What is thy name?" And he said
 10 to him, "My name is Legion, for we are many." And he entreated him earnestly not to drive them out of the country.
 11 Now a great herd of swine was there on the mountain-
 12 side, feeding. And the spirits kept entreating him, saying, "Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them."
 13 | And Jesus immediately gave them leave. And the unclean spirits came out and entered into the swine; and the herd, in number about two thousand, rushed down with great violence into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.
 14 But the swineherds fled and reported it in the town and in the country; and people came out to see what had
 15 happened. And they came to Jesus, and saw the man who

4, 40: *Are you still without faith?*: "faith" here does not mean faith in divine Providence but confidence in the solicitude of Jesus for them. Because of his reliable help in similar times of need in the past, they should have had more confidence in him. See Mt 8, 27 n.

5, 1-20: See Mt 8, 28-34.

5, 1: *Gerasenes*: see Mt 8, 28 n.

5, 11-14: See Mt 8, 32 n.

5, 12: The demons wanted another dwelling place on earth.

5, 15-17: The people were not impressed with Christ's victory over the demons. Presumably, they were diffident about his powers. Besides, the loss of the swine was probably another motive for requesting his departure.

had been afflicted by the devil, sitting clothed and in his
 16 right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen
 it reported to them how it had happened to the possessed
 17 man, and about the swine. And they began to entreat him
 to depart from their district.

18 And as Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who
 had been afflicted by the devil began to entreat him that
 19 he might remain with him. And he did not allow him, but
 said to him, "Go home to thy relatives, and tell them
 all that the Lord has done for thee, and how he has had
 20 mercy on thee." And he departed, and began to publish in
 the Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him. And all
 marvelled.

21 *The Daughter of Jairus; the Woman with a Hemorrhage*

And when Jesus had again crossed over in the boat to
 the other side, a great crowd gathered together to him; and
 22 he was at the water's edge. And there came one of the rulers
 of the synagogue named Jairus. And seeing Jesus, he fell at
 23 his feet, | and entreated him much saying, "My daughter is
 at the point of death; come, lay thy hands upon her, that she
 may be saved and live."

24 And he went away with him, and a great crowd was
 25 following him and pressing upon him. And there was a
 26 woman who for twelve years had had a hemorrhage, | and
 had suffered much at the hands of many physicians, and
 had spent all that she had, and found no benefit, but rather
 27 grew worse. Hearing about Jesus, she came up behind him in
 28 the crowd and touched his cloak. For she said, "If I touch
 29 but his cloak, I shall be saved." And at once the flow of
 her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she
 was healed of her affliction.

30 And Jesus, instantly perceiving in himself that power
 had gone forth from him, turned to the crowd, and said,
 31 "Who touched my cloak?" | And his disciples said to him,
 "Thou seest the crowd pressing upon thee, and dost thou
 32 say, 'Who touched me?'" And he was looking round to

5, 19: See Lk 8, 39 n.

5, 20: *Decapolis*: see map on p. 163.

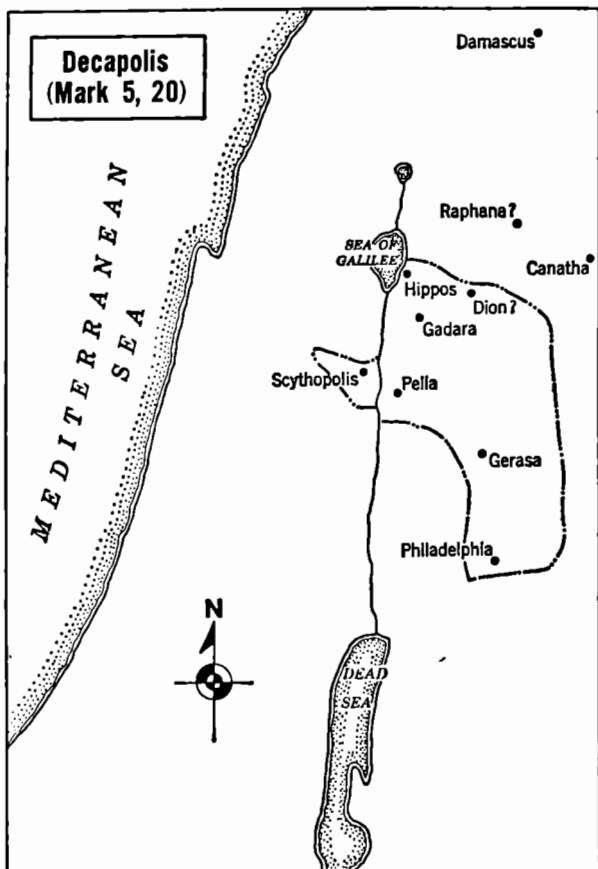
5, 21-43: For par see Mt 9, 18-26 n.

5, 23: *At the point of death*: Mt 9, 18 says, "died," a minor
 difference due most likely to oral transmission.

5, 25: *Woman . . . twelve years . . . hemorrhage*: see Mt 9, 20 n.

5, 30-34: Mk describes the cure according to the magical way that
 the woman thought it happened. See Mt 9, 21 n.

Decapolis (Mark 5, 20)



Decapolis or "Ten Cities" was a well-known term at the time of Jesus, but it is mentioned only in Mt 4, 25; Mk 5, 20 and 7, 31. The Decapolis was a loose federation of thriving Greek cities in Palestine. It was founded between 64 to 4 B.C. to protect the trade routes for Roman interests. The map indicates the cities as given by Pliny (about 75 A.D.) who stated that these ten cities were generally agreed upon in his day to form the district of the Decapolis. Three cities lie outside of Decapolis proper. A question mark means that the site is uncertain. Later lists, especially in the second century, vary in names and number of the cities.

- 33 see her who had done this. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened within her, came
 34 and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. But he said to her, "Daughter, thy faith has saved thee. Go in peace, and be thou healed of thy affliction."
 35 While he was yet speaking, there came some from the house of the ruler of the synagogue, saying, "Thy daughter is dead. Why dost thou trouble the Master further?"
 36 But Jesus, having heard what was being said, said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid, only have faith."
 37 And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James, and John the brother of James.
 38 And they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and he saw a tumult, people weeping and wailing
 39 greatly. | And going in he said to them, "Why do you make
 40 this din, and weep? The girl is asleep, not dead." And they laughed him to scorn. But he, putting them all out, took the father and mother of the girl and those who were
 41 with him, and entered in where the girl was lying. And taking the girl by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha cumi,"
 42 which is interpreted, "Girl, I say to thee, arise." And the girl rose up immediately and began to walk; she was
 43 twelve years old. And they were utterly amazed. | And he charged them strictly that no one should know of it, and directed that something be given her to eat.

6

- ¹ *Jesus at Nazareth* And leaving that place, he went into his
² own country, and his disciples followed him. And when the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue. And

5, 37: The same inner circle of the twelve apostles was present at the transfiguration (9, 1) and at the agony of the garden (14, 33).

5, 40: "*The girl is asleep, not dead*": some experts suggest that Jesus meant this literally and that the girl was in a coma. There is one principal objection to the "sleeping theory": Jesus said these words before he entered the room to see her. One non-Catholic scholar asks those who want decisive evidence that Jesus really restored the girl to life: "In such a question, could any 'evidence' be decisive?"

5, 41-43: There are several details here which may be paralleled with contemporary pagan miracle stories, e.g., the gesture, the phrase in a foreign tongue (v. 41), food as proof of the miracle (v. 43). It is not considered solid scholarship to conclude that the event did not happen because of such similarities.

5, 41: *Talitha cumi*: see 7, 34 n.

5, 43: The change could hardly be obeyed.

6, 1-6: See Mt 13, 55-56 n.

6, 1: *His own country*: Nazareth.

many, when they heard him, were astonished at his doctrine, saying, "Where did he get all this?" and, "What is this wisdom that is given to him?" and, "What mean such
 3 miracles wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and
 4 Simon? And are not also his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. | And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and
 5 among his own kindred, and in his own house." And he could not work any miracle there, beyond curing a few sick
 6 people by laying his hands upon them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

7 *The Mission of the Apostles* And he made a circuit of the villages, teaching. | And he summoned the Twelve and began to send them forth two by two; and he gave them power over
 8 the unclean spirits. | And he instructed them to take nothing for their journey, but a staff only—no wallet, no bread, no
 9 money in their girdle; | but to wear sandals, and not to
 10 put on two tunics. And he said to them, "Wherever you enter into a house, stay there until you leave the place.
 11 And whoever does not receive you, or listen to you—go forth from there, and shake off the dust from your feet
 12 for a witness against them." And going forth, they preached
 13 that men should repent, | and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many sick people, and healed them.

6, 3: *Carpenter*: although the Greek word may mean a craftsman, it more probably means carpenter here. *The son of Mary*: a unique phrase in the entire New Testament. The expression does not testify that Jesus was born of a virgin just because Mary alone is mentioned. In fact, although it may be an affectionate title for moderns, here it may well be meant derogatorily since it was against Jewish practice to describe a man by reference to his mother, unless insultingly, even when the father was dead.

6, 7-13: For par see Mt 10, 9-14 n. The passage in this Gospel inspired St. Francis of Assisi to follow Lady Poverty.

6, 7: Their activity seems to have extended all over Galilee.

6, 8: *A staff only*: parallels Mt 10, 10 and Lk 9, 3 forbid the staff.

6, 9: *Wear sandals*: parallels Mt 10, 10 and Luke 10, 4 forbid sandals. *Not to put on two tunics*: Mt and Lk change this to not owning two tunics.

6, 10: See Mt 10, 11 n.

6, 13: The anointing with oil is mentioned in the New Testament only in this verse, in Lk 10, 34 and in Jas 5, 14. Here, in Mk, there is no reference to the sacrament called Anointing of the Sick.

- 14** *Death of the Baptist* And King Herod heard of him, for his name had become well known; and he kept saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why
15 miraculous powers are working through him." But others were saying, "It is Elias." But others were saying, "It is a
16 prophet, like one of the prophets." | But when Herod heard of this, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded; he has risen from the dead."
17 For Herod himself had sent and taken John, and bound him in prison, because of Herodias, his brother Philip's
18 wife, whom he had married. For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."
19 But Herodias laid snares for him, and would have liked
20 to put him to death, but she could not. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and protected him; and when he heard him talk, he did many things, and he liked to hear him.
21 And a favorable day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet to the officials, tribunes and chief men of
22 Galilee. And Herodias' own daughter having come in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will
23 give it to thee." | And he swore to her, "Whatever thou dost ask, I will give thee, even though it be the half of my
24 kingdom." Then she went out and said to her mother, "What am I to ask for?" And she said, "The head of
25 John the Baptist." And she came in at once with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want thee right away to
26 give me on a dish the head of John the Baptist." And grieved as he was, the king, because of his oath and his
27 guests, was unwilling to displease her. But sending an executioner, he commanded that his head be brought on
28 a dish. Then he beheaded him in the prison, | and brought his head on a dish, and gave it to the girl; and the girl
29 gave it to her mother. His disciples, hearing of it, came and took away his body, and laid it in a tomb.

6, 14-16: For par see Mt 14, 1-2 n.

6, 14: *King*: this may have been his popular title but "Tetrarch" was his official title.

6, 17: *Philip*: he also had the name Herod.

6, 20: *Feared*: revered. *He did many things, and*: substitute: he did not understand, but . . .

6, 28: *Head*: there were several legends spun about the relic of the Baptist's head and about his body.

6, 29: There is no historically reliable account regarding the fate

³⁰ **Return of the Disciples** And the apostles came together to meet Jesus and reported to him all that they had done
³¹ and taught. And he said to them, "Come apart into a desert place and rest a while." For there were many coming and
³² going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they got into the boat and went off to a desert place apart.
³³ And many saw them leaving and recognized them; and from all the towns they hurried on foot to the place, and got there ahead of them.

³⁴ **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand** And when he landed, Jesus saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began
³⁵ to teach them many things. Now when the day was far spent, his disciples came, saying, "This is a desert place and the
³⁶ hour is already late; | send them away, so that they may go to the hamlets and villages round about and buy themselves food to eat."
³⁷ But he answered and said to them, "You yourselves give them some food." And they said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and
³⁸ give them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fishes."

of the relics of the Baptist's head or body. *Tomb*: it is only a legend that the Baptist's tomb is in Samaria.

6, 30-33: It is disputed whether this passage is an independent narrative or the introduction to the subsequent account of the loaves and fishes.

6, 33: *Recognized them*: another allowable translation is: "realized where they were going." *Ahead of them*: perhaps a wind delayed the boat.

6, 34-44: For par see Mt 14, 13-21 n. Some agnostics interpret the story according to modern ideas (not according to the text) by saying that the disciples shared with Jesus what they themselves had brought along. The people followed this example by sharing what they had till all were filled and a surplus remained. In this way, Jesus supposedly proved that there was enough food. (Depending on the commentators, the similarity with 4 Kgs 42-44 is used for or against the historicity of this episode.) Among the Christian commentators, some claim that the evangelists described the miracle with no idea of symbolizing the Eucharist (see 6, 41 n); others, and perhaps more correctly, understand that the evangelists intended with their description of the miraculous multiplication of loaves a symbolization of the Eucharistic meal or, at least, according to these commentators, the Christian readers understood the account as having these Eucharistic overtones. (See Jn 6, 1-15 n.)

6, 37: *Two hundred denarii*: a denarius equals a day's wages.

39 And he ordered them to make all the people recline in
40 groups on the green grass. And they reclined in groups of
41 hundreds and of fifties. And he took the five loaves and the
two fishes and, looking up to heaven, blessed and broke
the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the
42 people; and the two fishes he divided among them all. And
43 all ate and were satisfied; and they gathered up what was
left over, twelve baskets full of fragments, besides what
44 was left over of the fishes. Now those who had eaten were
five thousand men.

45 *Jesus Walks on the Water* And immediately afterwards he
made his disciples get into the boat and cross the sea ahead
of him to Bethsaida, while he himself dismissed the crowd.
And when he had dismissed them, he went away to the
47 mountain to pray. And when it was late, the ship was
48 in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And
seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against
them, about the fourth watch of the night he came to them,
walking upon the sea, and he would have passed by them.
49 But they, seeing him walking upon the sea, thought it was
50 a ghost, and cried out. For they all saw him, and were
troubled. Then he immediately spoke to them, and said to
51 them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." | And he
got into the boat with them, and the wind fell. And they
52 were utterly beside themselves with astonishment, | for they
had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was
blinded.

6, 41: Although these words are said and these gestures are made by the father at any family meal, they remind Christians of the Last Supper. *Looking up to heaven*: the Canon of the Mass borrows these words. The priest says them just before the words of consecration.

6, 45-52: For par see Mt 14, 22-23 n.

6, 47: *Late*: in the evening. *Ship . . . land*: the statement seems superfluous unless it means that the wind prevented the boatmen from joining Jesus.

6, 48: *Wind*: there was no great danger to their lives. *Fourth watch*: about 3:00 A.M. *He would have passed by them*: there is no satisfactory explanation for this statement.

6, 52: *Their heart was blinded*: their minds were blinded. This story is considered by some non-Catholic commentators to be a vision of Christ after the resurrection, misplaced here by the evangelist; others consider it a pious legend; still others, an historical yet misinterpreted incident, namely: Jesus was walking along the water's edge but not upon the waters. Miracle stories, characteristically, are interpreted differently by scholars, not only because of the text but because of the different interpretation of Christ's person.

⁵³ *Other Miracles* And crossing over, they came to the land
⁵⁴ at Genesareth and moored the boat. And when they had
 gotten out of the boat, the people at once recognized him;
⁵⁵ | and they hurried through that whole country, and began
 to bring the sick on their pallets, wherever they heard he
⁵⁶ was. And wherever he went, into village or hamlet or town,
 they laid the sick in the market places, and entreated him
 to let them touch but the tassel of his cloak; and as many
 as touched him were saved.

7

¹ *Jesus and the Pharisees* And the Pharisees and some of the
 Scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered about him.
² And when they saw that some of his disciples were eating
 bread with defiled (that is, unwashed) hands, they found
³ fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat with-
 out frequent washing of hands, holding the tradition of
⁴ the ancients. And when they come from the market, they
 do not eat without washing first. And there have been
 handed down to them many other things to observe: wash-
⁵ ing of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and beds. So the
 Pharisees and Scribes asked him, "Why do not thy dis-
 ciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients, in-
⁶ stead of eating bread with defiled hands?" But answering
 he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypo-
 crites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their
⁷ lips, but their heart is far from me; | and in vain do they
 worship me, teaching as doctrine the precepts of men.'
⁸ "For, letting go the commandment of God, you hold fast
 the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups;
 and many other things you do like to these."
⁹ And he said to them, "Well do you nullify the com-
 mandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition!
¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; and,

6, 53-56: See par Mt 14, 34-36. The disciples sail for Bethsaida (v. 45) on the northeastern shore, but they land at Genesareth on the northwestern shore, presumably on account of the head wind (v. 48). There are other explanations for this geographical vagueness.

6, 55: *Country*: countryside.

6, 56: *As touched him*: as touched it (the tassel). See Mt 9, 20 n.
 7, 1-23: See par Mt 15, 1-20.

7, 3: On this custom, see Mt 15, 2 n. On the "tradition of the ancients," see Mt 15, 1-7 n.

7, 5: *Walk*: live. *Bread*: food.

7, 6: See Mt 15, 8-9 n.

- 'Let him who curses father or mother be put to death.'
- 11 But you say, 'Let a man say to his father or his mother, "Any support thou mightest have had from me is Corban"', (that is, given to God). And you do not allow him
- 12 to do anything further for his father or mother. You make void the commandment of God by your tradition, which you have handed down; and many suchlike things you do."
- 14 Then he called the crowd to him again, and said to them,
- 15 "Hear me, all of you, and understand. | There is nothing outside a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things that come out of a man, these are what defile
- 16 a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."
- 17 And when he had entered the house away from the crowd, his disciples began to ask him about the parable.
- 18 And he said to them, "Are you also, then, without understanding? Do you not realize that nothing from outside, by entering a man, can defile him? For it does not enter his heart, but his belly, and passes out into the drain."
- 20 Thus he declared all foods clean. | "And," he said, "the things that come out of a man are what defile a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, come evil
- 22 thoughts, adulteries, immorality, murders, | thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, shamelessness, jealousy, blasphemy,
- 23 pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man."

4

- 24 *The Canaanite Woman* And he arose and departed from there for the district of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered

7, 11-12: The general meaning of our Lord's reprimand here and throughout the entire passage is that the Pharisees follow the letter and not the spirit of the Mosaic Law. The specific meaning in these two verses may be that the man swore to give to God the means necessary for the support of his parents or that he swore not to support them at all and donate everything to God.

7, 11: *Corban*: an Aramaic word. See 7, 34 n.

7, 19: *Heart*: mind. *Thus he declared all foods clean*: many scholars believe that these words have come from the evangelist and not from Jesus. The scholars, however, differ widely on the meaning. One opinion is: food, pure or impure, does not affect the moral worth of a man because these foods are indifferent in themselves, i.e., they are all clean.

7, 21-22: See Mt 15, 19 n about the list of vices.

7, 24-30: See par Mt 15, 21-28. The focal point of interest is not the miracle but the attitude of Jesus to announce the Gospel only to the Jews.

7, 24: *Tyre and Sidon*: see Mt 15, 21 n.

a house, and wanted no one to know it, but he could not
 25 keep it secret. For immediately a woman, whose little daughter
 had an unclean spirit, on hearing of him, came in and
 26 fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a
 Syrophoenician by birth. And she besought him to cast the
 27 devil out of her daughter. But he said to her, "Let the
 children first have their fill, for it is not fair to take the
 28 children's bread and to cast it to the dogs." But she answered
 and said to him, "Yes, Lord; for even the dogs under the
 29 table eat of the children's crumbs." And he said to her,
 "Because of this answer, go thy way; the devil has gone
 30 out of thy daughter." And when she went to her house,
 she found the girl lying upon the bed, and the devil gone.

31 *Healing of a Deaf-Mute* And departing again from the
 district of Tyre, he came by way of Sidon to the sea of
 32 Galilee, through the midst of the district of Decapolis. And
 they brought to him one deaf and dumb, and entreated him to
 33 lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the
 crowd, he put his fingers into the man's ears, and spitting,
 34 he touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he
 sighed, and said to him, "Ephpheta," that is, "Be thou
 35 opened." And his ears were at once opened, and the
 bond of his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak
 36 correctly. | And he charged them to tell no one. But the
 more he charged them, so much the more did they continue
 37 to publish it. And so much the more did they wonder,
 saying, "He has done all things well. He has made both
 the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

7, 26: *The woman was a Gentile*: see Mt 10, 5 n.

7, 27-28: Since it is difficult to imagine Jesus speaking so sternly
 and a woman admitting that her people are "dogs," some scholars
 entertain the possibility that the incident may have been touched up
 to reflect the unwillingness of the first Christians to preach to the
 Gentiles.

7, 29: In the cures narrated in this Gospel, Jesus usually performs
 them by contact or by a direct command.

7, 31: There are several attempts to explain this confusing route.

7, 32: *Dumb*: the man probably had a speech impediment. See
 7, 35.

7, 32-37: Only Mk relates this cure.

7, 34: *Ephpheta*: some other original Aramaic words recorded
 of Jesus are: the surname Boanerges (3, 17); "*Talitha cumi*" (5,
 41); "*Corban*" (7, 11); "*Abba*" (14, 36); "*Eloi . . .*" said at the
 crucifixion (15, 34).

8

1 Jesus Feeds Four Thousand In those days when again there was a great crowd, and they had nothing to eat, he
2 called his disciples together and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, for behold, they have now been with
3 me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away to their homes fasting, they will faint on the
4 way, for some of them have come from a distance." And his disciples answered him, "How will anyone be able to
5 satisfy these with bread, here in a desert?" He asked them, "How many loaves have you?" And they said, "Seven."
6 And he bade the crowd recline on the ground. Then taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they set them
7 before the crowd. And they had a few little fishes; and
8 he blessed them, and ordered them to be distributed. And they ate and were satisfied; and they took up what was
9 left of the fragments, seven baskets. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And he dismissed them.

10 The Pharisees Ask a Sign And immediately getting into the boat with his disciples, he came into the district of
11 Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to dispute with him, demanding from him a sign from heaven,
12 to test him. And sighing deeply in spirit, he said, "Why does this generation demand a sign? Amen I say to you, a sign shall not be given to this generation."

13 The Leaven of the Pharisees And he left them, and
14 getting back into the boat, crossed the sea. And they had

8, 1-9: Mt and Mk narrate two multiplications of loaves and fishes whereas Lk 9, 10-17 and Jn 6, 1-15 narrate only one. The long-standing opinion claims that Jesus performed this miracle on two different occasions. The modern opinion holds that all four Gospels speak of one and the same event with minor differences as to the numbers of loaves, fishes, and baskets. The variations are due to vague oral transmission. See Jn 6, 1-15 n for a table which shows these minor differences.

8, 10: *Dalmanutha*: there are many conjectures on the identity of this place.

8, 11-21: See par Mt 16, 1-12.

8, 11: *A sign from heaven*: whenever a Jewish scribe dared to interpret a law contrary to the opinion of the majority of his colleagues, he was expected to give a "sign from heaven," for instance, a clap of thunder.

15 forgotten to bring bread, and they had but one loaf with them in the boat. And he began to charge them, saying, "Take heed; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven
16 of Herod!" And they began to argue among themselves, saying, "We have no bread." But Jesus knowing this, said to them, "Why do you argue because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive, nor understand? Is your heart
18 still blinded? Though you have eyes do you not see, and though you have ears do you not hear? And do you not
19 remember? When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?"
20 They said to him, "Twelve." | "And when I broke the seven loaves among four thousand, how many large baskets
21 of fragments did you take up?" They said, "Seven." And he said to them, "How is it that you do not yet understand?"

22 *A Blind Man at Bethsaida* And they came to Bethsaida and they brought him a blind man and entreated him to
23 touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, he led him forth outside the village; and applying spittle to his eyes,

8, 15: In the parallel passage in Mt 16, 12 "the leaven of the Pharisees" means their teaching; in Lk 12, 1 where the warning against the Pharisees is said in another context, the expression means their hypocrisy. It is not clear what "leaven" means here in Mk except that it is something common to both Pharisees and Herod. Many commentators agree that since "leaven" slowly ferments or "corrupts" dough, the "leaven of the Pharisees" alludes to their corrupting influence, but beyond this general meaning the opinions differ as to a more specific meaning. Since the common aim of both the Pharisees and Herod was a politically united Jewish state, perhaps Jesus warned against their worldly spirit as opposed to the spiritual nature of his kingdom. Many scholars, especially non-Catholics, skillfully propose that Jesus uttered the words, but that v. 15 should be placed before v. 14. The text of v. 16 would then follow more logically after v. 14. In this wise, the whole point of Christ's conversation may be interpreted as his endeavor to make the disciples rise above the worry for bread and attain the confidence that he can save them again from this situation as he did previously.

8, 19-20: See Mt 16, 9-10 n.

8, 22-26: There are several similarities and several differences between this cure and the one in 7, 32-37. Scholars therefore dispute whether there were originally one or two different cures. Hardly anything in the text supports the views that the gradual process of curing was due to a difficult physical case of blindness; that the gradual recovery of sight was caused by the blind man's weak faith; that Jesus purposely cured in stages to symbolize the disciples' gradual awareness of who Jesus really was.

8, 22: *Bethsaida*: this may be Bethsaida Julias on the northeastern part of the lake of Galilee.

he laid his hands upon him, and asked him if he saw any
 24 thing. And the man looked up, and said, "I see men a
 25 though they were trees, but walking about." Then again
 he laid his hands upon the man's eyes, and he began to
 see, and was restored so that he saw all things plainly
 26 And he sent him to his house, saying, "Go to thy house
 and if thou enter the village, tell nobody."

27 *Peter's Confession* And Jesus and his disciples went out
 into the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way
 he asked his disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say
 28 that I am?" | They answered him, saying, "John the Baptist
 29 others, Elias, and others, one of the prophets." Then he
 said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter an-
 30 swered and said to him, ["Thou art the Christ."] And he
 strictly charged them to say nothing about him to anyone.

31 *Passion and Resurrection Foretold* And he began to teach
 them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be
 rejected by the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be
 32 put to death, and after three days rise again. And what he
 said he spoke openly. And Peter taking him aside, began
 33 to chide him. But he, turning and seeing his disciples, rebuked
 Peter, saying, "Get behind me, satan, for thou dost not mind
 the things of God, but those of men."

8, 27-30: See par Mt 16, 13-20.

8, 27: *Caesarea Philippi*: originally called Paneas. Philip, son of Herod the Great, rebuilt the city and called it Caesarea Philippi to distinguish it from Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast. The city was at the mouth of the Jordan River close to the foothills of Mount Hermon and about twenty miles north of the lake of Galilee.

8, 28-30: See Mt 16, 13-17 n.

8, 28: See Mt 16, 14 n.

8, 31-33: For par see Mt 16, 21-33 n. Each of the first three Gospels narrates our Lord's three predictions of his passion and death. Catholic scholars tend to regard them as three distinct prophecies spoken on three different occasions as the texts say; non-Catholic scholars tend to interpret the second and third series of predictions as variants of the first, the one and only prediction made by Jesus on one historical occasion.

8, 31: *After three days*: par Mt 16, 21 and Lk 9, 22 say more precisely, "the third day." According to the Hebrew way of reckoning time, a part of a day is counted as a whole day. *Rise again*: the New Testament says indifferently that Jesus "rose" (as here; Lk 24, 46; Jn 20, 9) or that he was "raised up" by God, as St. Paul says (Rom 6, 4).

8, 33: *Satan*: means tempter. Peter's worldly idea of a Messiah (those things of men) constitutes the same general kind of temptation

34 *The Doctrine of the Cross* And calling the crowd together with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his
35 cross, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's
36 sake will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he
37 gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? Or
38 what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in
39 the glory of his Father." And he said to them, "Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God coming in power."

9

1 *Jesus Transfigured* Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John, and led them up a high mountain off by
2 themselves, and was transfigured before them. And his garments became shining, exceedingly white as snow, as no

presented to Christ by the devil (Mt 4, 1-11). See Mt 16, 23 n on the harsh reply of Jesus.

8, 34-39: See par Mt 16, 24-28.

8, 34: The three requirements to become disciples of Jesus are: self-denial, bearing the cross, and loyalty ("follow me"). *Take up his cross*: when Jesus said this, he was not necessarily alluding to his crucifixion. What is more certain is that he was understood in the light of the well-known Roman method of execution by crucifixion. Hence, his audience did not immediately understand this to mean a patient acceptance of any sacrifice, even martyrdom as we understand today, but they immediately pictured to themselves the devastating experience of the condemned person carrying his cross to the spot of execution.

8, 35-38: See Mt 16, 25-27 n.

8, 35: See Mt 16, 25 n on the spiritual meaning of this verse.

8, 36: See Mt 16, 26 n.

8, 38: *Son of Man . . . comes . . . his Father*: see Mt 16, 27 n.

8, 39: See Mt 16, 28 n.

9, 1-7: For par see Mt 17, 1-8 n.

9, 1: *After six days*: from Peter's confession (8, 27-30). This is the most exact temporal statement in the Gospel of Mk before the Passion narrative. *Peter, James and John*: the same favored three were present at the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus and at Gethsemani. *A high mountain*: according to the most probable opinion, dating from the fourth century, this is Mount Tabor with an elevation of about 1,000 feet. It is about ten miles southwest of lake Galilee.

3 fuller on earth can whiten. And there appeared to them Elias with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus
 4 And Peter addressed Jesus, saying, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. And let us set up three tents, one for thee
 5 and one for Moses, and one for Elias." For he did not
 6 know what to say, for they were struck with fear. And there came a cloud overshadowing them, and there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And suddenly looking round, they no longer saw anyone with them but only Jesus.

8 *On the Coming of Elias* And as they were coming down from the mountain, he cautioned them to tell no one what they had seen, except when the Son of Man should have
 9 risen from the dead. And they kept what he said to themselves, discussing with one another what the words, "When he shall have risen from the dead," might mean.
 10 And they asked him, saying, "Why then do the Pharisees
 11 and Scribes say that Elias must come first?" But he answered and said to them, "Elias is to come first and will restore all things. But how then is it written of the Son of Man,
 12 that he should suffer many things and be despised? But I say to you that Elias has come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."

13 *A Possessed Boy* And on coming to his disciples, he saw a great crowd around them, and the Scribes arguing with
 14 them. And immediately all the crowd, on seeing him, were amazed and struck with fear, and running up, began to

9, 3: *Elias with Moses*: on the problem of how Peter knew that the two persons were Moses and Elias, those scholars who do not admit the exterior reality of the vision would most probably reply that Peter's knowledge of their identity was part of the literary embellishment of the story. Those who view the scene objectively would perhaps reply that the manner of dress was the clue to their identity.

9, 4: *Rabbi*: the title ("my great one"), not found in the Old Testament, was probably used at the time of Christ to address a famous teacher. In the New Testament "rabbi" is almost always used *only* in addressing Jesus.

9, 8-12: See par Mt 17, 9-13.

9, 10: See Mt 17, 10 n.

9, 11: *Elias is to come and will restore all things*: see Mt 17, 11b n.

9, 12: See Mt 11, 14 n.

9, 13-28: For par see Mt 17, 14-20 n.

9, 14: The description of the crowd's amazement is a detail characteristic of the evangelist.

- 15 greet him. And he asked them, "What are you arguing
 16 about among yourselves?" And one of the crowd answering,
 said, "Master, I have brought to thee my son, who has a
 17 dumb spirit; | and wherever it seizes him it throws him down,
 and he foams and grinds his teeth; and he is wasting away.
 And I told thy disciples to cast it out, but they could not."
 18 And he answered and said to them, "O unbelieving gen-
 eration, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put
 19 up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought him to
 him; and the spirit, when it saw Jesus, immediately threw the
 boy into convulsions, and he fell down on the ground, and
 20 rolled about foaming at the mouth. So he asked his father,
 "How long is it since this has come upon him?" And he said,
 21 "From his infancy. Oftentimes it has thrown him into the
 fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do
 22 anything, have compassion on us and help us." But Jesus
 said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to
 23 him who believes." At once the father of the boy cried out,
 and said with tears, "I do believe; help my unbelief."
 24 Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering,
 he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Thou deaf and
 dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him and enter him
 25 no more." And crying out and violently convulsing him, it
 went out of him, and he became like one dead, so that many
 26 said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, and
 raised him and he stood up.
 27 And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked
 28 him privately, "Why could not we cast it out?" And he said
 to them, "This kind can be cast out in no way except by
 prayer and fasting."

29 *The Second Prediction of the Passion* And leaving that
 place, they were passing through Galilee, and he did not wish

9, 16: *A dumb spirit*: either the boy was mute or the "spirits"
 refused to speak.

9, 17: See Mt 17, 14 n.

9, 18: See Mt 17, 16 n.

9, 23: *Help my unbelief*: he asks that he may be given more con-
 fidence in the power of Jesus to perform the cure.

9, 24: See Mt 17, 17 n.

9, 28: *And fasting*: probably not in the original text. See Mt
 17, 20 n.

9, 29-31: For par see Mt 17, 21-22 n. The second prediction of
 the Passion in the Gospels of Mt, Mk and Lk is the most meager in
 information of all three predictions. It does not contain the rejection
 by the Jewish leaders (as in the first prediction) nor the torture by
 the Romans (as in the third).

30 anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been
31 killed, he will rise again on the third day." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

32 *Against Ambition and Envy* And they came to Capernaum. When he was at home, he asked them, "What were
33 you arguing about on the way?" But they kept silence, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them
34 was the greatest. And sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, "If any man wishes to be first, he shall be last
35 of all, and servant of all." And he took a little child, and set him in their midst, and taking him into his arms, he said
36 to them, | "Whoever receives one such little child for my sake, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

37 John said to him, "Master, we saw a man who was not one of our followers casting out devils in thy name, and we
38 forbade him." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, because there is no one who shall work a miracle in my name, and
39 forthwith be able to speak ill of me. For he who is not
40 against you is for you. For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

41 *Avoiding Scandal* "And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better for him if a great millstone were hung about his neck, and he were thrown

9, 30: The term, "the Son of Man," is used in the three accounts of the predictions by Mt, Mk and Lk, except in the first prediction in Mt.

9, 32-36: See par Mt 18, 1-4.

9, 33: This statement is not found in par Mt 18, 1, for Mt characteristically softens whatever may cast an unfavorable light on the disciples.

9, 35-36: In par Mt 18, 4, the child is used to teach humility; here, Jesus uses the child to teach the welcoming of the most needy members of the community.

9, 37-40: See par Lk 9, 49-50. Most scholars reject the opinion that the recording of the episode involving the strange exorcist was influenced by a similar incident which happened to Moses (Nm 11, 26-29).

9, 40: Rather than by content, this verse is connected verbally by the use of "name" with vv. 37-39.

9, 41: For par see Mt 18, 6 n.

- 42 into the sea. If thy hand is an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off! It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, 43 'Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.'
- 44 "And if thy foot is an occasion of sin to thee, cut it off! It is better for thee to enter into life everlasting lame, than, having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, 45 'Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.'
- 46 "And if thy eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out! It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with 47 one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire, 'Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.'
- 48 "For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every victim 49 shall be salted. Salt is good; but if the salt becomes insipid, what shall you season it with? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

5

10

1 And leaving that place, he came to the district of Judea beyond the Jordan, and crowds again flocked to him. And as had been his custom, he began to teach them.

2 *The Question of Divorce* And some Pharisees coming up asked him, testing him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away 3 his wife?" But he answered and said to them, "What did 4 Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted us to 5 write a notice of dismissal, and to put her away." But Jesus said to them, "By reason of the hardness of your heart he 6 wrote you that commandment. But from the beginning of 7 creation God made them male and female. 'For this cause a

9, 42-46: These verses are briefer in par Mt 18, 8-9. See Mt 5, 29-30 n.

9, 43: Most textual critics hold that this quotation of Is 66, 24 ('Where their worm dies not,' etc.) is not found in vv. 43 and 45 in the original text but only in v. 47.

9, 48-49: These three sayings are only loosely related with the notion of scandal in the preceding verses.

9, 48: Every cereal offering to God had to be salted to be accepted (see Lv 2, 13). So must every disciple be "salted" through the purifying fire of sufferings sent by God.

9, 49: See Mt 5, 13 n.

10, 2-9: See par Mt 19, 3-9.

10, 2: For the evangelist's addition of "for any cause" and its explanation, see Mt 19, 3 n.

- man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his
 8 wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' Therefore now
 9 they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God
 has joined together, let no man put asunder."
 10 And in the house, his disciples again asked him concern-
 11 ing this. And he said to them, "Whoever puts away his wife
 12 and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if
 the wife puts away her husband, and marries another, she
 commits adultery."

- 13 *Jesus Blesses the Children* And they were bringing little
 children to him that he might touch them; but the disciples
 14 rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw them,
 he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the little children
 come to me, and do not hinder them, for of such is the king-
 15 dom of God. Amen I say to you, whoever does not accept
 the kingdom of God as a little child will not enter into it."
 16 And he put his arms about them, and laying his hands upon
 them, he began to bless them.

- 17 *The Danger of Riches* And as he was going forth on his
 journey, a certain man running up fell upon his knees before
 him, and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do to gain
 18 eternal life?" But Jesus said to him, "Why dost thou call
 19 me good? No one is good but only God. | Thou knowest the
 commandments:

"Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou
 shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt
 not defraud, honor thy father and mother."

- 20 And he answered and said, "Master, all these I have kept
 21 ever since I was a child." And Jesus, looking upon him, loved

10, 8: See Mt 19, 7-8 n.

10, 11-12: For the explanation on divorce see Mt 19, 9 n.

10, 13-16: See par Mt 19, 13-15.

10, 13: *Touch them*: bless them, as explained in v. 16.

10, 15: The expression "the kingdom of God" is here used in
 the double sense of entry into the kingdom on earth (see Mt 3, 2 n)
 and into the final kingdom at the end of time.

10, 16-17: See Mt 19, 16-17 n.

10, 16: *Laying his hands . . . bless them*: he blessed them by
 placing his hands on them. It is characteristic for the evangelist to
 include the human side of Jesus.

10, 17-31: For par see Mt 19, 16-30.

10, 19: See Ex 20, 12-16; Dt 5, 16-20. The reading "Thou shalt
 not kill" should precede "Thou shalt not commit adultery" as in
 Mt 19, 18.

him, and said to him, "One thing is lacking to thee; go, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have
 22 treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But his face fell at the saying, and he went away sad, for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus looking round, said to his disciples, "With what difficulty will they who have riches enter the kingdom of
 24 God!" | But the disciples were amazed at his word. But Jesus again addressed them saying, "Children, with what difficulty will they who trust in riches enter the kingdom of God!
 25 It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle,
 26 than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" But they were astonished the more, saying among themselves, "Who
 27 then can be saved?" And looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Behold, we have left all and
 29 followed thee." Answering, Jesus said, "Amen I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake and for
 30 the gospel's sake, who shall not receive now in the present time a hundredfold as much, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands—along with per-
 31 secutions, and in the age to come life everlasting. But many who are first now will be last, and many who are last now will be first."

32 *The Third Prediction of the Passion* They were now on their way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was walking on in front of them, and they were in dismay, and those who followed were afraid. And again taking the Twelve, he began
 33 to tell them what would happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the Scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles;

10, 25: A characteristic Semitic hyperbole.

10, 26-27: See Mt 19, 26 n.

10, 30: *The age to come*: see its parallel expression "regeneration" as explained in Mt 19, 28 n.

10, 32-34: For par see Mt 20, 17-19 n. The third series of Christ's prediction of his passion and death features more details than the previous two and is closest to the actual Passion narrative itself.

10, 32: *Jerusalem*: This is the first time that the evangelist mentions Jerusalem as the goal of the journey.

34 and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again."

35 *Ambition of James and John* And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, "Master, we want thee
36 to do for us whatever we ask." But he said to them, "What
37 do you want me to do for you?" | And they said, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at thy right hand and the other at
38 thy left hand, in thy glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of which I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with
39 which I am to be baptized?" And they said to him, "We can." And Jesus said to them, "Of the cup that I drink, you shall drink; and with the baptism with which I am to be baptized,
40 you shall be baptized; | but as for sitting at my right hand or at my left, that is not mine to give, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared."

41 And when the ten heard this, they were at first indignant
42 at James and John. But Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers among the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise
43 authority over them. | But it is not so among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to become great shall be your
44 servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be
45 the slave of all; | for the Son of Man also has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

10, 35-45: See par Mt 20, 20-28.

10, 35: See Mt 20, 21 n.

10, 42-45: Jesus contrasts the assertive earthly rulers with the Christian spirit of service and offers himself as a model.

10, 45: *To give his life as a ransom for many*: many commentators understand these words of Jesus as a reference to the redemptive effect of his death through an allusion to the servant (Is 53, 12) who offers his life for the expiation of the sins of others, ". . . he surrendered himself to death . . . he shall take away the sins of many. . . ." The phrase "for many" does not mean that Jesus did not die for all. It is used as in Is 53, 12 where the one redeeming servant is contrasted with the multitude of the others (all men). Not only the notion of expiatory death of the Messiah was strange to Jewish ears but that the people needed to be redeemed from sin was also foreign to them.

It is still disputed whether the phrase, "to give his life as a ransom for many," is out of context. First, it is not included in par Lk. Second, there is a sudden shift in the context from service to ransom. Third, the ransom doctrine is more characteristic of St Paul's teaching than of Mt, Mk and Lk.

46 **The Blind Bartimeus** And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a very great crowd, Bartimeus, a blind man, the son of Timeus, was sitting by
 47 the wayside, begging. And hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have
 48 mercy on me!" And many angrily tried to silence him. But he cried out all the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
 49 Then Jesus stopped and commanded that he should be called. And they called the blind man and said to him, "Take
 50 courage. Get up, he is calling thee." And throwing off his
 51 cloak, he sprang to his feet and came to him. And Jesus addressed him, saying, "What wouldst thou have me do for thee?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabboni, that I may
 52 see." And Jesus said to him, "Go thy way, thy faith has saved thee." And at once he received his sight, and followed him along the road.

6

11

1 **Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem** And when they drew near to Jerusalem and to Bethany, at the Mount of Olives,
 2 he sent two of his disciples, | and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it you will find a colt tied, upon which no man has yet sat; loose it, and
 3 bring it. And if anyone say to you, 'What are you doing?' you shall say that the Lord has need of it, and immediately he will send it here."
 4 And they went their way and found a colt tied at a door
 5 outside in the street, and they loosed it. And some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the
 6 colt?" But they answered them as Jesus had told them to do, and they let them go.
 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their cloaks
 8 over it, and he sat upon it. And many spread their cloaks

10, 46-52: For par see Mt 20, 29-34 n.

10, 46: *Bartimeus*: among the parallel accounts only Mk gives the name of the blind man and the detail of the cloak (v. 50).

10, 51: *Rabboni*: Aramaic for "my master." See 9, 4 n on "rabbi."

11, 1-11: These verses indicate the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem since it is the first time that the evangelist mentions our Lord's presence in Jerusalem. (See par Mt 21, 1-11.)

11, 1: *Mount of Olives*: see Mt 21, 1 n.

11, 2-10: See Mt 21, 2-9 n.

11, 2-3: See Mt 21, 2-3 n.

11, 3: *The Lord*: see Mt 21, 3 n.

- upon the road, while others were cutting branches from the
 9 trees, and strewing them on the road. And those who went
 before him, and those who followed, kept crying out, saying,
 10 "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
 Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes!
 Hosanna in the highest!"
 11 And he went into Jerusalem, into the temple. And when
 he had looked round upon all things, then, as it was already
 late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.
- 12 *Jesus Curses a Fig Tree* And the next day, after they had
 13 left Bethany, he felt hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig
 tree in leaf, he went to see if he might find anything on it.
 But when he came up to it, he found nothing but leaves; for
 14 it was not the season for figs. Then he spoke to it saying,
 "May no one ever eat fruit of thee henceforward forever."
 And his disciples heard.

11, 10: *Hosanna*: a Hebrew word meaning "save, we pray." In the New Testament the word is found on this occasion of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The phrase was originally prayed in time of danger; gradually it came to signify in the liturgy a shout of joy. *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*: see Ps 117, 26 n. *Our father David*: it is unusual in the Bible to call David "our father" because this honorific title is reserved especially for the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In fact, the whole formula "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes!" is infrequent. The only kingdoms that come are those of God or of the Messiah. See Ps 117, 26 n.

11, 11: This anticlimactic sequel must have disappointed the people. It is not difficult to see how they would soon turn against Jesus on "Good Friday." (There are no cogent reasons to affirm that those who acclaimed him [see vv. 7-10] were only Galilean pilgrims and that the "Good Friday" crowd comprised only Judeans.)

11, 12-14: See par Mt 21, 18-19.

11, 13: *It was not the season for figs*: in April the figs are only in the embryonic stage. (The evangelist speaks a few days before Easter.) In June the fruit matures; in August the late-season figs mature.

11, 14: The difficulty is: why does Jesus curse a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season to satisfy his hunger? His conduct is generally interpreted as a symbolic action or "an acted parable" similar to those of the Old Testament prophets (Jer 18, 1-12). According to one interpretation the fig tree symbolizes Israel planted by God, but it failed to bear the spiritual fruit of conversion. The cursing symbolizes God's condemnation of the people. Some serious objections to this interpretation are: 1. (This is the most cogent objection.) This action attributed to Jesus is far out of proportion to the motive of hunger and, therefore, unworthy of him. 2. Can the cursing of a fig tree at a time when it could not yet bear fruit be considered as an adequate symbol of the condemnation of the Chosen

- 15 *Cleansing of the Temple* And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple, and began to cast out those who were selling and buying in the temple; and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who
 16 sold the doves. He would not allow anyone to carry a vessel through the temple. And he began to teach, saying to them,
 17 "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of thieves."
 18 And the chief priests and the Scribes heard it, and they sought a way to destroy him; for they were afraid of him,
 19 because all the crowd were astonished at his teaching. And when it was evening he went out of the city.
 20 And as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig

People? 3. There is no hint given by Jesus that he wants to be interpreted symbolically. 4. Peter's reaction (v. 21) shows no awareness of a symbolic meaning of the curse. 5. The evangelist seems to present this episode literally as an act of Jesus to show his divinity. Many modern scholars admittedly conjecture that the evangelist transformed into a factual miracle story the parable of the barren fig tree, recorded in Lk 13, 6-9.

11, 15-19: See par Mt 21, 12-17. According to the opinion of older commentators, Jesus cleansed the temple twice; the majority of moderns hold that Jesus cleansed it only once, but its date remains a moot question. The three Gospels of Mt, Mk, and Lk place this episode at the beginning of Christ's last week (Mt and Lk on the day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and Mk on the day after). The Gospel of Jn places it at the beginning of Christ's ministry.

It is not clear in what sense our Lord's cleansing of the temple was Messianic. It was Messianic insofar as it realized the renewal of the temple as announced in Ez 40-48, but it is not clear just how much Jesus claimed it to be a Messianic action or how deeply the people understood it as Messianic.

11, 15: *The temple*: in what was probably the Court of the Gentiles, oxen, sheep, and doves were sold for sacrifice. Roman and Greek coins were exchanged for Jewish and Tyrian coins, as these were the only two acceptable for temple offerings. People also came to pay their annual temple tax (Mt 17, 23). *Selling and buying*: the temple priests were ultimately responsible for allowing it to happen that the money changers and the sellers of animals overcharged the pilgrims. Jesus does not object to the convenience of proper selling and buying or to the system of sacrifice.

11, 16: This verse is a peculiarity of the evangelist's narrative. It is a prohibition to pedestrians to use the Court of the Gentiles as a short-cut to other parts of the city.

11, 17: *For all the nations*: of all the four evangelists it is Mk alone who completes the quote from Is 56, 7. *A den of thieves*: compare Jer 7, 11.

11, 18: The popularity of Jesus foiled their plans temporarily.

11, 20: *In the morning*: according to this evangelist, the cursing of the fig tree (vv. 12-14) took place the preceding day. Mt has the

21 tree withered from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to him, "Rabbi, behold, the fig tree that thou didst curse is
 22 withered up." But Jesus answered and said to them, "Have
 23 faith in God. | Amen I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Arise, and hurl thyself into the sea,' and does not waver in his heart, but believes that whatever he says will
 24 be done, it shall be done for him. Therefore I say to you, all things whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you shall
 25 receive, and they shall come to you. And when you stand up to pray, forgive whatever you have against anyone, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your of-
 26 fenses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive you your offenses."

27 *The Authority of Jesus* And they came back to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and
 28 the Scribes and the elders came to him, | and said to him, "By what authority dost thou do these things?" and, "Who
 29 gave thee this authority to do these things?" | But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question, and answer me; then I will tell you by what authority I
 30 do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven, or
 31 from men? Answer me." But they began to argue among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say,
 32 'Why then did you not believe him?' | But if we say, 'From men'—they feared the people; for all regarded John as
 33 really a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And Jesus answering, said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

12

¹ *Parable of the Vine-dressers* And he began to speak to

cursing and the fig tree's "withering" as well as the subsequent conversation take place within the same day (Mt 21, 18-19). In Lk the incident is not mentioned at all, probably because of his parable on a fig tree (Lk 13, 6-9).

11, 23: *Heart*: mind.

11, 24: If you are disposed to believe that you have received everything you have asked for in prayer, it shall come to you.

11, 27-33: See par Mt 21, 23-27.

11, 27: *As he was walking in the temple*: see Lk 20, 1-8 n.

11, 28: *By what authority*: see Mt 21, 23 n.

11, 30: See Mt 21, 25 n.

12, 1-12: See par Mt 21, 33-46.

12, 1: For the cast of this allegory, see Mt 21, 33 n. See Is 5, 1-7 n for a precedent of Israel pictured as God's vineyard.

- them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, and put a hedge about it, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower; then
 2 he let it out to vine-dressers, and went abroad. And at the proper time he sent a servant to the vine-dressers to receive from the vine-dressers some of the fruit of the vineyard; |
 3 but they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another servant to them; but this
 4 one they wounded in the head and treated shamefully. And again he sent another, and him they killed, and many others;
 6 beating some, and killing some. Now he still had one left, a beloved son; and him he sent to them last of all, saying, "They will respect my son."
 7 "But the vine-dressers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they seized him and killed him, and cast him out of the
 9 vineyard. What therefore will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-dressers, and will give the
 10 vineyard to others. And have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected, has become the corner
 11 stone; by the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?'"
 12 And they sought to lay hands on him, but they feared the crowd; for they knew that he had aimed this parable at them. And leaving him, they went their way.
 13 *Tribute to Caesar* And they sent to him certain of the Pharisees and Herodians, that they might trap him in his talk.
 14 And they came and said to him, "Master, we know that thou art truthful, and that thou carest naught for any man; for thou dost not regard the person of men, but dost teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar; or
 15 shall we not give it?" But knowing their craftiness, he said to them, "Why do you test me? Bring me a denarius to look
 16 at." | So they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose are this image and the inscription?" They said to him,
 17 "Caesar's." | And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render,

12, 7: Besides some underlying legal basis, this reasoning was true to life among the ignorant and poverty-ridden peasants of these areas.

12, 8: See Mt 21, 39 n.

12, 10: See Acts 4, 11 n.

12, 13-17: For par see Mt 22, 15-22 n.

12, 13: *Trap him*: see Lk 20, 20 n.

12, 14: See Mt 22, 16 n. *Tribute*: poll tax.

12, 16-17: See Mt 22, 20-21 n.

therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marvelled at him.

18 *The Sadducees and the Resurrection* And there came to him Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, and they began to question him, saying, "Master, Moses has written for us that 'if a man's brother die, leaving a wife but no children, his brother shall take the widow and raise up issue to his brother.' | Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and dying, left no issue. And the second took her, and died, without leaving issue either; and the third likewise. And the seven took her in the same way, and left no issue. Last of all the woman also died. | At the resurrection, therefore, when they rise, of which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her as wife."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Is not this why you err—because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven. But as to the dead rising, have you not read in the book of Moses about the Bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"

"He is not the God of the Dead, but of the living. You are therefore entirely wrong."

28 *The Great Commandment* And one of the Scribes came forward who had heard them disputing together; and seeing that he had answered them well, he asked him which was the first commandment of all. But Jesus answered him, "The first commandment of all is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our

12, 18-27: See par Mt 22, 23-33.

12, 18-23: See Mt 22, 25-28 n.

12, 19: See the levirate marriage in Dt 25, 5-10.

12, 24-27: In a veiled manner Jesus says that personal immortality is based on union with God.

12, 24: *You know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God:* see Mt 22, 29 n.

12, 26-27: On this kind of arguing which is foreign to us, see Mt 22, 31-32 n.

12, 28-31: See par Mt 22, 34-40.

12, 28: *Which was the first commandment of all:* see Mt 22, 36 n.

12, 29: *Jesus answered:* see Lk 10, 25-28 n. *Hear, O Israel!* . . . *one God:* this formula, missing in the parallel passages of Mt and Lk, constitutes the opening verse of the daily Jewish prayer, the *Shema*. The formula connoted the one God who chose Israel; total love (v. 30) is Israel's response.

- ³⁰ God is one God; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.'
- ³¹ "This is the first commandment. | And the second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'
- ³² "There is no other commandment greater than these." | And the Scribe said to him, "Well answered, Master, thou hast said truly that he is one and that there is no other besides
- ³³ him; and that he should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with one's whole strength; and that to love one's neighbor as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices."
- ³⁴ And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." And no one after that ventured to ask him questions.
- ³⁵ *The Son of David* And while Jesus was teaching in the temple, he addressed them, saying, "How do the Scribes say
- ³⁶ that the Christ is the Son of David? For David himself says, by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool.'
- ³⁷ "David himself, therefore, calls him 'Lord'; how, then, is he his son?" And the mass of the common people liked to hear him.
- ³⁸ *Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees* And in the course of his teaching he said to them, "Beware of the Scribes, who like to walk about in long robes, and to be greeted in the
- ³⁹ market place, | and to have the front seats in the synagogues
- ⁴⁰ and the first places at suppers; | who devour the houses of the widows, making pretense of long prayers. These shall receive a heavier sentence."
- ⁴¹ *The Widow's Mite* And Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and observed how the crowd were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in

12, 30: See Dt 6, 5 n.

12, 31: See Lv 19, 18 n.

12, 35-37: See par Mt 22, 41-46.

12, 35: See Mt 22, 46 n.

12, 37: See Mt 22, 45 n.

12, 38-40: See par Mt 23, 6-7.

12, 41-44: See par Lk 21, 1-4.

12, 41: *The treasury*: this probably refers to chests along the wall of the Court of the Women at the temple.

- 42 large sums. And there came one poor widow, and she put in
 43 two mites, which make a quadrans. And he called his disciples
 together, and said to them, "Amen I say to you, this poor
 widow has put in more than all those who have been putting
 44 money into the treasury. For they all have put in out of their
 abundance; but she out of her want has put in all that she
 had—all that she had to live on."

13

- 1 *Destruction of Jerusalem and End of the World* And
 as he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said
 to him, "Master, look, what wonderful stones and buildings!"
 2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Dost thou see all
 these great buildings? There will not be left one stone upon
 another that will not be thrown down."
 3 And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite
 the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked
 4 him privately, "Tell us, when are these things to happen, and
 what will be the sign when all these things will begin to
 come to pass?"
 5 And in answer Jesus began to say to them, "Take care
 6 that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name,
 7 saying, 'I am he'; and they will lead many astray. But when
 you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed;
 8 for they must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For na-
 tion will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;
 and there will be earthquakes in various places, and famines.
 These things are the beginning of sorrows.
 9 "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you up to
 councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will
 stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness
 10 to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the
 11 nations. And when they lead you away to deliver you up, do

12, 42: *Two mites*: two small copper coins. The proverbial "widow's mite" comes from here. *A quadrans*: a cent.

12, 44: *She . . . put in all that she had . . . to live on*: the text does not say how Jesus came to know this. The similar stories in Greek and Buddhist literature are not dependent on other sources, but are based on our common human nature and condition.

13, 1-37: See Mt 24-25 n.

13, 2: *One stone upon another*: see Mt 24, 2 n for this hyperbole.

13, 4: See Mt 24, 3 n.

13, 7: See Mt 24, 6-7 n.

13, 9-13: See Mt 10, 17-22 n.

13, 10: *All the nations*: see Mt 24, 9 n.

not be anxious beforehand what you are to speak; but speak whatever is given you in that hour. For it is not you who are
 12 speaking, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise
 13 up against parents and put them to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake; but he who has persevered to the end will be saved.

14 *Destruction of Jerusalem* "And when you see the abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not—let him who reads understand—then let those who are in Judea flee
 15 to the mountains; | and let him who is on the housetop not go down and enter to take anything from his house; | and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak.
 17 But woe to those who are with child, or have infants at the breast in those days! But pray that these things may not happen in winter. For in those days will be tribulations, such as have not been from the beginning of the creation which God
 20 created until now, nor will be. And unless the Lord had shortened the days, no living creature would be saved. But for the sake of the elect whom he has chosen, he has shortened the days.

21 *The Signs of the Last Day* "And then, if anyone say to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ; behold, there he is,' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible,
 23 even the elect. | Be on your guard, therefore; behold, I have told you all things beforehand.
 24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give her light, | and the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that are in
 26 heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming upon clouds with great power and majesty.

13, 14: *The abomination of desolation*: see Mt 24, 15 n.

13, 15: *Not go down*: by an outside staircase. See another probable example in Lk 5, 19 n.

13, 19-23: Scholars dispute about these transitional verses just as they dispute about the parallel transitional verses of Mt 24, 21-28. See Mt 24—25 n.

13, 20: *The elect*: see Mt 24, 22 n.

13, 24-27: For par see Mt 24, 29-31 n.

13, 26: The majority opinion views this verse as the prediction that our Lord (presented here as the Son of Man of Dn 7, 13) will bring to bear his triumphant power in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Compare Mt 10, 23 n.

27 And then he will send forth his angels, and will gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost parts of heaven.

28 *Jerusalem's Impending Destruction* "Now from the fig tree learn this parable. When its branch is now tender, and leaves break forth, you know that summer is near. Even so when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, even at the door. Amen I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things have been accomplished. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

32 *The Need of Watchfulness* "But of that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is: | just as a man, when he leaves home to journey abroad, puts his servants in charge, to each his work, and gives orders to the porter to keep watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or early in the morning; | lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, 'Watch.'"

II. THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

I. THE LAST SUPPER

14

¹ *The Council* Now it was two days before the Passover and the feast of the Unleavened Bread; the chief priests and the Scribes were seeking how they might seize him by stealth.

13, 27: The majority opinion is: the Chosen People (the Elect) are called to the unity of the New Israel of God in the Church.

13, 28-31: See Mt 24, 32-35 n.

13, 31: See Mt 24, 35 n.

13, 32-37: This section seems to refer to the end of the world.

13, 32: *Nor the Son*: see Mt 24, 36 n.

13, 33: *When the time is*: when the time will come.

13, 35: These are the four watches of the night according to the Roman reckoning.

14, 1-2: See par Mt 26, 1-5.

14, 1: *Two days before*: some experts say this means Wednesday, the thirteenth of Nisan. *Passover and the feast of the Unleavened Bread*: see Lk 22, 1 n.

- 2 and put him to death; | for they said, "Not on the feast, or there might be a riot among the people."
- 3 *The Anointing at Bethany* And when he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and was reclining at table, there came a woman with an alabaster jar of ointment, genuine nard of great value; and breaking the alabaster jar, 4 she poured it on his head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "To what purpose 5 has this waste of the ointment been made? for this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." And they grumbled at her.
- 6 But Jesus said, "Let her be. Why do you trouble her? 7 She has done me a good turn. | For the poor you have always with you, and whenever you want you can do good to 8 them; but you do not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body in preparation for burial. 9 Amen I say to you, wherever in the whole world this gospel is preached, this also that she has done shall be told in memory of her."
- 10 *The Betrayal* And Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went 11 to the chief priests to betray him to them. And they, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought out an opportunity to betray him.

14, 2: *Not on the feast*: the Greek is not as clear as this translation, but the most probable view is that according to the evangelist's account the priests and scribes proposed to arrest Jesus after the feast. The betrayal of Judas, however, hastened the arrest.

14, 3-9: On the relation between Mk's account and the unnamed woman in Lk 7, 36-50 see par Mt 26, 6-13 n.

14, 3: *A woman*: according to par Jn 12, 3 this is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Many scholars distinguish two other women: Mary Magdalene was the woman from whom Jesus expelled seven devils (Mk 16, 9; Lk 8, 1-3); she was at Calvary (Mt 27, 55-56 par) and at the sepulcher (Mt 27, 61 par). Mary Magdalene is not mentioned again in the New Testament outside of the Gospels. The other woman is the unnamed public sinner of Lk 7, 36-50. *Genuine*: the exact meaning of the Greek word is disputed.

14, 4: *Some*: the remark is made by "the disciples" in Mt 26, 8 and by Judas in Jn 12, 4.

14, 7: See Mt 26, 11 n.

14, 8: See Mt 26, 12 n.

14, 9: There is considerable doubt that Jesus himself ever said these words, for he rarely spoke so directly of preaching to the Gentiles after his death.

14, 10-11: See par Mt 26, 14-16.

14, 10: *One of the Twelve*: see 14, 43 n.

12 **Preparation** And on the first day of the Unleavened Bread when it was customary for them to sacrifice the passover, the disciples said to him, "Where dost thou want us to go and
13 prepare for thee to eat the passover?" And he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and there will meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him
14 And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Master says, "Where is my guest chamber, that I may eat
15 the passover there with my disciples?"' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready for
16 us." And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found just as he had told them; and they prepared the passover.

17 **The Betrayer** Now when evening arrived, he came with the Twelve. And while they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "Amen I say to you, one of you will betray me—one
19 who is eating with me." But they began to be sad, and to
20 say to him one by one, "Is it I?" But he said to them, "It is
21 one of the Twelve, who dips into the dish with me. The Son of Man indeed goes his way, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were better for that man if he had not been born."

14, 12-16: See par Mt 26, 17-19.

14, 12: See Lk 22, 1 n and especially Jn 18, 28 n on the date of the passover meal.

14, 13-16: Although the Greek words and phrases are consistently parallel with those in 11, 1-6 (the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem), the two incidents are clearly different.

14, 13-15: See Lk 22, 10-12 n.

14, 13: *A man carrying a pitcher of water*: he would be noticeable since only women carried pitchers.

14, 15: *Upper room*: see Acts 1, 13 n. The site of this upper room dates from the fourth century. *Furnished*: with a low table (Lk 22, 21) and most likely with rugs, cushions, and couches. The wine was not peculiar to the paschal meal, for it was commonly used at any festive meal.

14, 17-21: For par see Mt 26, 20-25 n.

14, 18: *One who is eating with me*: an allusion to Ps 40, 10. See Jn 13, 18 n.

14, 20: *One of the Twelve*: see 14, 43 n. *Who dips into the dish with me*: since everyone took food from the common platter at that time (as the Orientals do today), it is understood that Jesus here refuses to answer who the traitor is.

14, 21: *Son of Man goes his way*: to the cross. *As it is written of him*: as the Old Testament says.

22 **The Holy Eucharist** And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessing it, he broke and gave it to them, and said, 23 "Take; this is my body." And taking a cup and giving thanks, 24 he gave it to them, and they all drank of it; | and he said to them, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is being 25 shed for many. Amen I say to you, that I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 **Peter's Denials Predicted**] And after reciting a hymn, they 27 went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all be scandalized this night; for it is written, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 "But after I have risen, I will go before you into Galilee." 29 But Peter said to him, "Even though all shall be scandalized, 30 yet not I." Jesus said to him, "Amen I say to thee, today,

14, 22-25: For par see Mt 26, 26-29 n.

14, 22-24: *This is my body . . . this is my blood*: see Mt 26, 26 n.

14, 22: *And while they were eating*: this repeats "and while they were at the table eating" (v. 18). Was the Last Supper a Jewish passover meal during which Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist? Or was the Last Supper a Jewish passover meal after and to which Jesus appended the institution of the Holy Eucharist? Nowadays, the answer is more commonly in the affirmative to the first question. It seems that Jesus fused the distribution of the Eucharistic bread and wine with appropriate parts of the Jewish passover meal. See *synchronized table* on the Last Supper, pp. 126-127.

14, 23: *They all drank of it*: see Mt 26, 27 n.

14, 24: See Mt 26, 28 n for "the new covenant" and "for many."

14, 25: See Lk 22, 15-18 n. *New*: see Mt 26, 29 n.

14, 26-31: For par see Mt 26, 30-35 n.

14, 26: *After reciting a hymn*: see Mt 26, 30 n. The passover often lasted till midnight. *Mount of Olives*: the rules of the passover feast did not permit the participants to pass the night beyond the city limits. These limits extended to Bethphage on Mount Olivet across the brook of Cedron (Jn 18, 1). Jesus went to his favorite garden, Gethsemani, at the foot of Mount Olivet, about one mile from the Upper Room. He therefore kept the rule, and this is another indication that the Last Supper was celebrated within the framework of the passover meal.

14, 27: Knowing that his apostles will abandon him during the Passion, Jesus warns them by predicting that they will experience the severest doubt in him as Messiah when they will see him arrested and humiliated the same night. The prophet (see Za 13, 7 n) does not foretell this event but Jesus adapts his words to the situation.

14, 28: To encourage his apostles, Jesus invites them to meet him in Galilee after his resurrection. (V. 28 seems out of place here.) See 16, 7.

14, 30: The evangelist says, Peter will deny Christ three times before a cock crows *twice*. Mt 26, 34; Lk 22, 34; and Jn 13, 38 say,

this very night, before a cock crows twice, thou wilt deny me
 31 three times." But he went on speaking more vehemently, "Even
 if I should have to die with thee, I will not deny thee!" And
 they all said the same thing.

II. THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS

32 *The Agony in the Garden* And they came to a country
 place called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples, "Sit
 33 down here, while I pray." | And he took with him Peter and
 James and John, and he began to feel dread and to be ex-
 34 ceedingly troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is sad,
 35 even unto death. Wait here and watch." And going for-
 ward a little, he fell on the ground, and began to pray that,
 36 if it were possible, the hour might pass from him; | and he
 said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee. Remove
 this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt."
 37 Then he came and found them sleeping. And he said to
 Peter, "Simon, dost thou sleep? Couldst thou not watch one
 38 hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into tempta-
 39 tion. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And
 again he went away and prayed, saying the same words over.
 40 And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes
 were heavy. And they did not know what answer to make to

Peter will deny Christ three times before the cock crows. For more discrepancies see the fulfillment of Peter's denial in Mk 14, 66-72 n. The "cock-crowing," i.e., the beginning of the day, was known even to classical writers. The "*gallicinium*," as it was called, was sounded at 3:00-4:00 A.M. when the third watch began (see 13, 35 n) by a bugle from the fortress Antonia, near the temple. *Today*: it began at sunset according to Jewish reckoning.

14, 32-42: See par Mt 26, 36-46.

14, 32: *Gethsemani*: this has been identified as the site of the agony since only the fourth century.

14, 33-36: See Mt 26, 37-39 n.

14, 35: A "commentary" on the impenetrable depth of our Lord's sorrow is evident in Bellini's painting that shows *Christ at Gethsemani* with his face in the shadows.

14, 36: *Abba, Father*: "Abba," an Aramaic word of invocation, expresses (like our "Dad") more intimacy than the ordinary Hebrew word for father, which is *ab*. *Abba* is accompanied by its Greek equivalent "Father" in all the three New Testament places (Rom 8, 15; Gal 4, 6). Most probably Jesus himself used both terms, the Aramaic and Greek, or the New Testament writers reflect the custom of the early Christians who kept the intimate Aramaic word with its Greek translation. *Remove this cup from me*: but God did not remove the cup of suffering.

41 him. And he came the third time, and said to them, "Sleep on now, and take your rest! It is enough; the hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
42 | Rise, let us go. Behold, he who will betray me is at hand."

43 *Jesus Arrested* And while he was yet speaking, Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, came and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the Scribes
44 and the elders. Now his betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, that is he; lay hold of him, and lead
45 him safely away." And when he came, he went straight up to
46 him, and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. And they seized him and held him.

47 But one of the bystanders drew his sword, and struck the
48 servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus, addressing them, said, "As against a robber you have come
49 out, with swords and clubs, to seize me. I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not lay hands on me. But it is so that the Scriptures may be fulfilled."

50,51 Then all his disciples left him and fled. And a certain young man was following him, having a linen cloth wrapped
52 about his naked body, and they seized him. But leaving the linen cloth behind, he fled away from them naked.

53 *Jesus before the Sanhedrin* And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the priests and the Scribes and the
54 elders gathered together. But Peter followed him at a distance, even to the courtyard of the high priest, and was sitting with
55 the attendants at the fire and warming himself. Now the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin were seeking witness against

14, 41: *Sleep*: see Mt 26, 45 n.

14, 43-52: See par Mt 26, 47-56.

14, 43: *One of the Twelve*: within thirty-three verses of the Passion narrative, the evangelist designates three times only Judas with this title (here, and in vv. 10 and 20). Since the title sounds like a formula it has been conjectured that the early Christians labeled Judas with this title to emphasize his horrendous betrayal.

14, 44: *Safely*: lest he escape.

14, 47: *One of the bystanders*: Peter, according to Jn 18, 10.

14, 49: *The Scriptures*: see Lk 24, 45-47 n.

14, 51-52: Since this episode has nothing to do with the Passion, Mt and Lk omit it. It is only a conjecture that the young man who tried to follow Christ was Mark the evangelist.

14, 53-65: See Mt 26, 57-68 n on the chronological sequence of events where it is explained that this "night" trial of vv. 53-65 is really the morning trial described in Mk 15, 1.

14, 54: *Attendants*: temple police.

Jesus, that they might put him to death, but they found none
 56 For while many bore false witness against him, their evidence
 57 did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness
 58 against him, saying, | "We ourselves have heard him say, 'I
 will destroy this temple built by hands, and after three days I
 59 will build another, not built by hands.'" And even then their
 evidence did not agree.

60 Then the high priest, standing up in their midst, asked
 Jesus, saying, "Dost thou make no answer to the things that
 61 these men prefer against thee?" But he kept silence, and
 made no answer. Again the high priest began to ask him, and
 said to him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed
 62 One?" | And Jesus said to him, "I am. And you shall see
 the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and
 coming with the clouds of heaven."

63 But the high priest tore his garments and said, "What
 64 further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blas-
 phemy. What do you think?" And they all condemned him as
 65 liable to death. And some began to spit on him, and to blind-
 fold him, and to buffet him, and to say to him, "Prophecy."
 And the attendants struck him with blows of their hands.

66 *Peter's Denial* } And while Peter was below in the court-
 yard, there came one of the maidservants of the high priest; |

14, 58: See Mt 26, 61 n.

14, 60: *Prefer*: bring.

14, 61-62: See Mt 26, 63-64 n on the question of the high priest and Christ's answer.

14, 61: *Blessed one*: an Hebraic circumlocution for God.

14, 62: It is disputed whether this verse refers to Christ's return at the end of the world or to his coming through the destruction of Jerusalem (compare 13, 26 n). See also Mt 26, 64 n.

14, 63: *Tore his garments*: this gesture developed from a profound sign of grief (Gn 37, 29) to a formal act in court by the high priest when a blasphemy was uttered.

14, 64: *The blasphemy*: see Mt 26, 65 n. *They all condemned him as liable to death*: regarding the controversy on whether or not the Sanhedrin really condemned Jesus to death, the better opinion is: even though Mk is more explicit than Mt in par 26, 66, in neither account is Jesus explicitly condemned to death but only declared deserving of it. The dispute about condemnation is distinct from the dispute about whether the Sanhedrin convocation was a formal trial or only a preliminary hearing for the Roman trial before Pilate.

14, 65: See par Lk 22, 63-65 n. *Attendants*: temple police.

14, 66-72: One of the most conspicuous discrepancies in the four Gospel accounts of the prediction and fulfillment of Peter's denial is that Peter denied Christ *more* than three times, even though Christ explicitly predicted only three denials. For example, the standard "second" denial seems to be a group of denials including one denial

67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him
 68 and said, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." | But
 he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what
 thou art saying." And he went outside into the vestibule; and
 69 the cock crowed. And the maidservant, seeing him again, began
 70 to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them." | But again
 he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again
 said to Peter, "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art
 71 also a Galilean." But he began to curse and to swear: "I do
 72 not know this man you are talking about." And at that mo-
 ment a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered
 the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before a cock crows
 twice, thou wilt deny me three times." And he began to
 weep.

15

¹ *Jesus before Pilate* And as soon as it was morning, the
 chief priests held a consultation with the elders, the Scribes
 and the whole Sanhedrin. And they bound Jesus and led him

to the "maidservant seeing him again" (Mk 11, 69), another denial
 to "another maid" (Mt 26, 71), and still another denial to "some-
 one else" (Lk 22, 58). Several "harmonizing" answers are offered,
 but modern scholars ascribe these discrepancies to the normal result
 of oral tradition and believe that the triple denial was meant to em-
 phasize Peter's complete denial of Christ.

The varying traditions of the evangelists show that they were not
 concerned with other historical details such as the precise wording of
 Peter's denials, whether the cock crowed once or twice, or whether
 the second denial was to the same maidservant (Mk 14, 69f) or to
 another maidservant (Mt 26, 71f).

14, 68: *Vestibule*: gateway.

14, 72: See 14, 30 n.

15, 1-15: For par see Mt 27, 1-2 and Mt 27, 11-26 n.

15, 1: *Morning*: see 14, 53-65 n. *Pilate*: Pontius Pilate (except
 for Lk 3, 1; 13, 1) is mentioned in the New Testament only in con-
 nection with the trial of Jesus. Pilate was the fifth Roman governor
 of Palestine (26-36 A.D.). He was already infamous in Jewish eyes
 because of his antagonistic attitude manifested in several episodes.
 Josephus relates that the Jews succeeded in having Tiberius order
 Pilate to remedy an offense by removing the gilded plaque with the
 emperor's name on it from Herod's palace in Jerusalem to the temple
 of Augustus in Caesarea. Another offense committed by Pilate was
 the use of temple money to build an aqueduct. Again, Pilate permitted
 the Roman soldiers to carry the insignia bearing Caesar's image as
 they marched into Jerusalem. See Lk 13, 1 for another violent deed.
 (Killing and beatings were connected with the deeds related above.)

2 away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" And he answered him and 3 said, "Thou sayest it." And the chief priests accused him of 4 many things. And Pilate again asked him, saying, "Hast thou no answer to make? Behold how many things they accuse 5 thee of." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate wondered.

6 Now at festival time he used to release to them one of 7 the prisoners, whomever they had petitioned for. Now there was a man called Barabbas imprisoned with some rioters, one 8 who in the riot had committed murder. And the crowd came up, and began to ask that he do for them as he was wont. 9 But Pilate addressed them, saying, "Do you wish that I release to you the king of the Jews?" For he knew that the chief 10 priests had delivered him up out of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them 11 instead. But Pilate again spoke and said to them, "What 12 then do you want me to do to the king of the Jews?" But 13 they cried out again, "Crucify him!" | But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they kept crying out the 14 more, "Crucify him!"

15 *The Scourging and Crowning* So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released to them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged 16 and delivered to be crucified. Now the soldiers led him away into the courtyard of the praetorium, and they called together

15, 2: *Thou sayest it*: see Mt 27, 11 n.

15, 3: *The chief priests*: they seem to have been the original accusers of Christ, even though the Gospels mention their helpers (Jn 19, 6), namely: the Sanhedrin and the rulers (Lk 23, 1 and 13), the elders (Mt 27, 12), and the crowds who are frequently mentioned by Lk and Jn. The Pharisees are hardly mentioned. *Many things*: see Lk 23, 2 n.

15, 6: For this custom see Jn 18, 39 n.

15, 7: *Barabbas*: after the Gospel scene nothing is known of his later history.

15, 8: *Do for them as he was wont*: grant them the customary favor.

15, 10: The chief priests were jealous of Christ's popularity among the people.

15, 15: *Scourged*: the Gospels of Mt and Mk present the flagellation as the customary punishment preceding the crucifixion; Jn (and though the third evangelist records no flagellation, see Lk 23, 16 and 22) presents it as an expedient to placate the people. See Lk 23, 11 n. *Delivered*: see Jn 19, 16 n.

15, 16-20: See par Mt 27, 27-31.

15, 16: *Praetorium*: see Jn 19, 13 n on the dispute of its site.

17 the whole cohort. And they clothed him in purple, and plait-
 18 ing a crown of thorns, they put it upon him, | and began to
 19 greet him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they kept striking
 him on the head with a reed, and spitting upon him; and
 bending their knees, they did homage to him.

20 *The Way of the Cross* And when they had mocked him,
 they took the purple off him and put his own garments on
 21 him, and led him out to crucify him. And they forced a
 certain passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country,
 the father of Alexander and Rufus, to take up his cross.
 22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha, which
 translated, is the Place of the Skull.

23 *The Crucifixion* And they gave him wine to drink mixed
 24 with myrrh; but he did not take it. | Then they crucified him,

15, 17: *A crown of thorns*: this was an unusual instrument of
 torture in the penalty of crucifixion.

15, 21-27: See par Mt 27, 32-38.

15, 21: *Alexander and Rufus*: although the episode narrated in
 this verse is mentioned in the first three Gospels, only Mk gives the
 names of the men. The casual mention of the father and his sons
 without any further explanation implies that they were known to the
 readers of Mk. The four other Alexanders mentioned in the New
 Testament are different persons. It is disputed whether the Rufus of
 Rom 16, 13 is identical with the person mentioned by Mk. Only in
 later apocryphal works appear the names of these brothers again. *His*
cross: see Mk 8, 34 n.

15, 22: *Place of the Skull*: "Golgotha" is its Aramaic, and *Kranion*
 its Greek name; *Calvariae* is the Latin word for it, from which comes
 our Calvary. The promontory was called "skull" because it was shaped
 like one. The place, therefore, did not get its name because the
 skulls of criminals were found there nor because of the legend that
 Adam's skull was buried there. (This legend is reflected by artists
 when they place a skull at the foot of the crucifix.) On a different
 symbolism of the skull see in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, "Gareth
 and Lynette," I, 1373.

The exact spot of this promontory "near the city" (Jn 19, 20), but
 outside of it, is unknown. The present-day church of the Resurrection,
 which incorporates the spot where Christ was crucified, has been con-
 sidered the traditional site only from the fourth century onward.

15, 23: *Mixed with myrrh*: in Mt, "mixed with gall." It was
 customary for Jewish women to offer a condemned man a drink of
 wine drugged with frankincense to benumb his senses and alleviate
 his pain. In Mk's account, the wine was mixed with myrrh, but
 neither this mixture nor the "gall" mixture mentioned in Mt would
 produce a benumbing effect unless the two evangelists meant to say it
 was offered as refreshment. Perhaps Mk was influenced by Prv 31,
 6-7, and Mt by Ps 68, 22. This scene is different from that of the
 fifth word, "I thirst" (Jn 19, 28).

15, 24: *They crucified him*: it is disputed whether Jesus was cru-

and divided his garments, casting lots for them to see what each should take. Now it was the third hour and they crucified him. And the inscription bearing the charge against him was, "The King of the Jews."

And they crucified two robbers with him, one on his right hand and one on his left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And he was reckoned among the wicked."

And the passers-by were jeering at him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha, thou who destroyest the temple, and in three days buildest it up again; | come down from the cross and save thyself!" In like manner, the chief priests with the Scribes said in mockery to one another, "He saved others himself he cannot save! Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." And they who were crucified with him reproached him.

33 The Death of Jesus And when the sixth hour came, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which, translated, is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" | And some of the bystanders on hearing this said, "Behold, he is calling Elias." But someone ran, soaked a sponge in common wine, put it on a reed and offered it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us

cified naked. *Divided his garments*: see Jn 19, 23-24 n. *Casting lots*: stones, marked with different colors or symbols, were put in a container and shaken till one jumped out.

15, 25: *The third hour*: this may be understood as 9:00 A.M. or from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon. An adequate agreement is reached by identifying the "third hour" with the noon hour as given in Jn 19, 14. Since so many activities were taking place on the day of Christ's Passion, the noon hour seems preferable. Some scholars do not find adequate as yet an explanation that would reconcile the two different times of Christ's crucifixion, notwithstanding the argument that two different times of reckoning were used. Others, however, say that the accounts of the two evangelists are based on two different traditions.

15, 26: See Jn 19, 19-22 and annotations.

15, 28: Many textual critics delete v. 28. It probably comes from Lk 22, 37.

15, 29-32: See par Mt 27, 39-44.

15, 29: See Mt 26, 61 n.

15, 33-41: See par Mt 27, 45-56.

15, 33: *Sixth hour*: noon. *Darkness*: see Mt 27, 45 n. *Ninth hour*: about 3:00 P.M.

15, 34-35: *Eloi . . . he is calling Elias*: see Mt 27, 47 n.

15, 34: See Mt 27, 46 n and Mk 7, 34 n on the recorded Aramaic words of Jesus.

15, 36: *Common wine*: see Mt 27, 48 n.

37 see whether Elias is coming to take him down." But Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and expired.

38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top
39 to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw how he had thus cried out and expired, he said, "Truly
40 this man was the Son of God." | And some women were also there, looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph,
41 and Salome. These used to accompany him and minister to him when he was in Galilee—besides many other women who had come with him to Jerusalem.

42 *The Burial* Now when it was evening, as it was the Day
43 of Preparation, that is, the eve of the Sabbath, | there came Joseph of Arimathea, a councillor of high rank, who was himself looking for the kingdom of God. And he went in boldly
44 to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered whether he had already died. And sending for the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when
45 he learned from the centurion that he was, he granted the body to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen cloth, and took him
46 down, and wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock. Then he rolled
47 a stone to the entrance of the tomb. But Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were looking on and saw where he was laid.

15, 37: *Jesus . . . expired*: scholars agree that the day was the fourteenth of Nisan, Friday, but they differ on the date and year: was it April 7, 30 A.D. or April 3, 33 A.D.?

15, 38: See Mt 27, 51 n.

15, 39: *Facing him*: opposite him. *Saw . . . expired*: textual critics either delete this phrase or offer several variations. *The Son of God*: Mt says the same, in Lk it reads "a just man." The modern tendency is to interpret "Son of God" not in the sense of the centurion's belief in Jesus as divine but, rather, to mean Jesus as a human being (as Lk expressed it), albeit an exceptional human being. However, it is certain that the readers of Mt and Mk understood "Son of God" in the sense of: divine Son of God.

15, 42-47: See par Mt 27, 57-61.

15, 42: *Was evening*: the Greek says: "became dark." This would have been about 4:00 P.M. on Friday, the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath, which would begin the same day at sunset.

15, 43: *A councillor of high rank*: he was a member of the Sanhedrin. Since the apostles fled, there was no one to bury Jesus.

15, 44: *Pilate wondered*: Pilate was astonished that Jesus had died so soon, because sometimes the crucified victims lived for two days. See Lk 22, 44 n.

15, 47: The women wanted to know where Jesus was to be buried "that they might go and anoint him" (16, 1).

III. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

16

1 *The Women at the Grave* And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome,
2 bought spices, that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb,
3 when the sun had just risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll the stone back from the entrance
4 of the tomb for us?" And looking up they saw that the stone
5 had been rolled back, for it was very large. But on entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right side,
6 clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed. He said to them, "Do not be terrified. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here.
7 Behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee; there you shall
8 see him, as he told you." And they departed and fled from the tomb, for trembling and fear had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

9 *Apparitions of Jesus* Now when he had risen from the dead early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to

16, 1-8: See par Mt 28, 1-10.

16, 1: *Bought spices*: there was not enough time left for the women to anoint the body of Jesus on Friday. They would have been allowed to anoint him on the Sabbath, but the purchase of the perfumed oils ("spices") delayed the anointing till Sunday.

16, 2: *The first day of the week*: Sunday.

16, 4: According to par Mt 28, 2 the angel "rolled back the stone."

16, 4-8: Whether the angel truly appeared or not (see Mt 28, 2-4 n) the essential aim of this passage is that the women were the first to learn from heaven in some supernatural manner that Christ had arisen.

16, 5: *A young man sitting*: see the variants of this in Lk 24, 4 n.

16, 6: The women believed in Christ's resurrection, not because the stone was rolled away, but because of the heavenly message. *He has risen*: "He has been raised," by God.

16, 7: A reference to 14, 28.

16, 8: *They said nothing to anyone*: at least for now because, according to par Mt 28, 8, they "ran to tell his disciples." Perhaps Mk explained this strange phrasing in the lost ending of this Gospel.

16, 9-20: These verses are missing in many important Greek manuscripts. The list of the appearances of Jesus now given in these verses represents extracts from the accounts in the other three Gospels, differing in style and vocabulary from all that preceded in Mk's Gospel. Therefore, and for other reasons, Christian scholars agree

10 Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. She went and brought word to those who had been with him, as they were mourning and weeping. And they, hearing that he was alive and had been seen by her, did not believe it.

12 After this he was manifested in another form to two of them, as they were walking on their way into the country. And they went and brought word to the rest, and even then they did not believe.

14 *Commission of the Apostles* At length he appeared to the Eleven as they were at table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and hardness of heart, in that they had not believed those who had seen him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned. And these signs shall attend those who believe: in my name they

that vv. 9-20 as we now have them were not written by Mk. Many scholars also agree that the Gospel of Mk did not end with 16, 8. There are various theories offered to prove the improbability of such an abrupt ending, the loss of the last sheaf of the codex, for instance. Catholics, however, consider vv. 9-20 as having been written by another inspired writer and as an integral part of the Bible. Instead of the longer ending (vv. 9-20), some Greek manuscripts have a "shorter" ending. It continues v. 8: "But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation."

16, 9-10: See par Jn 20, 11-18.

16, 11: Compare Lk 24, 10-11.

16, 12-13: A summary of Lk 24, 13-35.

16, 14: *Hardness of heart*: stubbornness. *After he had risen*: in Greek, "after he had been raised" by God. Since the apostles' disbelief in the resurrection is mentioned twice before (vv. 11 and 13), this verse is particularly strong. It may well be that this emphasis of the disciples' incredulity reflects the strong belief of the Christians at the time when the Gospel was written.

Between vv. 14 and 15, the fourth or fifth century manuscript of the Greek Gospel in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inserts a dialogue between the risen Lord and his disciples. The disciples blame the devil for their disbelief and request the second coming of Jesus. The Lord answers that the power of the devil has come to its end, and that some things must yet be done. He ends with the command to preach to all the world. Christian scholars agree that this "Freer Logion" is not an inspired part of the Bible.

16, 15-16: See par Mt 28, 18-20.

16, 17-18: *These signs*: five kinds of signs are listed by way of examples. They helped to make converts in the first century as Acts show. Judging from the New Testament, the first, second, and fifth signs occurred frequently; the third sign, once; and the fourth, never.

- 18 shall cast out devils; they shall speak in new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall get well."

IV. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

- 19 *The Ascension* So then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sits at the right hand of
20 God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the preaching by the signs that followed. Amen.

These signs appeared intermittently throughout the history of the Church, including the present era. Exorcism seems to be the most frequent. *In my name . . . devils*: the meaning is: they will perform exorcisms through Christ's power. *New tongues*: this may mean speaking in foreign languages and/or in ecstasy. *Serpents*: see Lk 10, 19 n and Acts 28, 3-6. *If they drink . . . not hurt them*: there is no instance of this in the New Testament.

16, 19: See par Lk 24, 50-51.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

INTRODUCTION

Luke was probably a pagan from Antioch in Syria. We know nothing about when and how he was converted. According to the "we" passages in Acts (see Introduction to Acts of the Apostles) Luke accompanied St. Paul on part of his journeys, and finally went along with him to Rome where Paul was imprisoned. From prison Paul refers to Luke as "our most dear physician" (Col 4, 14). The medical terms used in the third Gospel and in Acts were, until recently, proposed as proofs that the author was a physician. Lately, however, it is admitted that these "specialized medical terms" were within the range of the average educated man's vocabulary and understanding. Some scholars, therefore, reject these medical terms as indicative of Luke's specialized medical knowledge. Others say that on occasion his selection of words affirm that he was a physician as Paul says. The parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark do not point out illnesses as clearly as Luke's account does. Luke says, for example, that Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from a *great* fever (4, 38); he says that the man was *full* of leprosy (5, 12) whereas Matthew and Mark say only "a leper." (See Lk 8, 43 n.)

An appealing portrait of Luke's personality emerges from his writings. He must have been sympathetic toward all types of people, especially toward the poor about whom he writes so much. Moreover, on several occasions when he uses Mark's Gospel, he omits the harsh remarks of Mark. There is another pleasing aspect of Luke's personality: although it would have been so natural to say something about himself in many places, especially in the "we" passages, he leaves the impression of a self-effacing individual. His vocabulary makes us think of him as an Hellenistic gentleman. Another jewel in Luke's crown of virtues is his loyalty to Paul.

Luke's later life is shrouded in unreliable traditions concerning the fields of his ministry, and so are the manner and place of his death. "Tradition" says that the evangelist was one of our Lord's seventy-two disciples (Lk 10, 1); that he never married; that he was martyred in Rome or Greece. The best known traditional saying, though, is that he was a painter. Writings which refer to Luke as a painter can be traced back to the year 460 A.D. The most famous Madonna attributed to him is kept in the church of St. Mary Major in Rome. Writings mentioning the Madonna go back only as far as 847 A.D. In spite of the insufficient historical evidence of Luke's artistic work, he has inspired more artists than any of the evangelists. Scholarly speculations ascribe the origin of Luke's fame as a

painter to his ability as a writer. As a writer he has inspired more poets than any of the evangelists.

There never was a serious doubt as to Luke's authorship of the third Gospel. Authoritative voices have been ringing out in his favor since the second century (St. Irenaeus). Very many of even the most demanding critics today consider Luke the author (see Introduction to Acts of the Apostles).

Luke's literary skill is outstanding in the Gospel as well as in Acts. Yet he should not be compared with the classical Greek historians of the fifth century B.C., except for the prologue to his Gospel (1, 1-4) which may legitimately be compared with the style of Herodotus and Thucydides. Luke writes fine *koine* Greek. (See the beginning of the Introduction to the New Testament.) His vocabulary, at least, may be placed side by side with that of contemporary Hellenistic writers such as Polybius and Josephus. Luke's affinity to them is evident in other techniques, such as his use of the travelogue in both his Gospel and Acts, and still another example is his treatment of Theophilus (see 1, 1-4 n).

In comparison with the Semitic authors of the New Testament, Luke uses 261 words which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament (his Gospel contains 19,400 words). Luke does not make use of the Hebrew Old Testament nor of the arguments from Old Testament prophecy as much as Matthew does. Yet, the third evangelist reveals such an intimate acquaintance with the Greek Old Testament that some scholars are convinced of his deliberate occasional imitation of its style, especially in the canticles of chapters 1-2. On the other hand, oddly enough, Luke's Gospel contains more Hebrew idioms than the other Gospels, as, for instance, "it came to pass," "and behold!" To sum up, Luke is a man of two styles, Jewish and Hellenistic. Among the New Testament writers, he is outranked in his Greek style only by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Of the dozen or so of inspired writers on the New Testament roster, pride of place goes to Luke as the most versatile.

Luke's portrayal of Christ is best characterized by Dante's description, "the scribe of the meekness of Christ." Truly, the inspired physician sketches the gentle Christ better than any other evangelist, even though Luke most probably never met Jesus in person, nor was he one of Christ's immediate disciples.

The purpose of Luke's writing is to render an orderly account of Christ's life, but not a biography (see 1, 1-4 n). The readers for whom Luke wrote were Christians converted from paganism. The place where he wrote the third Gospel is uncertain. The guesses range from Alexandria in Egypt to Rome and Greece. The date of writing is also uncertain, but a date about 80 to 85 A.D. is usually the choice of many scholars. This late date does not imply the denial that Luke recorded our Lord's true prophecy of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. (see 19, 43-44 n).

Some of the accounts in Luke's Gospel must have come from oral sources. There is no way of proving who the actual transmitters were. Scholars can only conjecture on their identity by pointing to persons mentioned in the Gospel whom Luke probably met. Besides, the

evangelist shows a knowledge of certain facts which have easily been told him by these persons as, for instance, by: Manahen, a central figure of the Antiochian Church (Acts 13, 1); Philip the deacon (Acts 21, 8); followers of John the Baptist; the holy women who followed our Lord, and chiefly the Mother of Jesus (chs. 1—2).

Scholars agree that the most evident written source used by Luke was the Gospel of Mark. Luke follows it to such an extent that the basic structure of Luke's Gospel is the same as Mark's. The third evangelist followed Mark, except for the infancy narrative (1—2), the "little insertion" (6, 20—8, 3), and the "great insertion" (9, 51—18, 14). By "insertion" or "interpolation" scholars mean Luke's injection of his own material into the stream of Mark's Gospel. Luke and Matthew wrote their narratives of Christ's infancy independently of each other. The little insertion deals mostly with the Sermon on the Plain which parallels Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount.

The great insertion is about a journey of Jesus and his disciples toward Jerusalem. This distinguishing travelogue makes the third Gospel unique. The journey begins in Galilee and leads via the road through Samaria to Jerusalem. During the trip, the evangelist conveniently inserts many sayings and deeds of Jesus that never really occurred then. The literary fiction was recognized as such by Luke's readers. This travel narrative, original with Luke as an evangelist, is repeated in Acts. The journey is periodically accentuated by a reminder that Jesus and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem. These accentuations are found in 13, 22 and 33; 17, 11. Three allusions to the journey are in 9, 57; 10, 38; and 14, 25. By some force, as it were, everything tends toward Jerusalem. See 18, 14 n. It is disputed whether the Passion narrative (chs. 22—24) follows Mark or is independent of the second evangelist.

The Gospel of Luke is often remembered by one or more of these distinctive traits: of all the Gospels it shows interest in women most. Immediately there come to mind Luke's vivid verbal portraits of Mary, Elizabeth, the widow of Naim, the sinful woman at Simon's banquet, and of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus. Examples are also found in Acts. This trait reflects the Hellenistic background of Luke. His mention of prominent women stands out in bold contrast with the more silent treatment of women by the other evangelists in whose Semitic world women remained in the background.

The happy term, the "gospel of the outcasts," brings out another characteristic (see 15, 1-10 n). Seen through Jewish spectacles, there was a certain despicable affinity of spirit among the outcasts, sinners, and Samaritans. Luke, on the contrary, often speaks sympathetically of the socially inferior. He seems to encircle these three categories with charity rather than disdain. The oft-quoted saying of Harnack is relevant here: Luke "has a boundless—indeed a paradoxical—love for sinners, together with the most confident hope of their forgiveness and amendment."

Luke's first volume is often called the "gospel of joy." He alone

records the three canticles of the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc dimittis* (chs. 1—2). He does not weary in writing about the "good news of great joy" at the Savior's birth. The "gospel of prayer" is another title by which Luke's masterpiece is known. He repeatedly mentions that our Lord went aside to pray (e.g., 5, 16). The eminent role given in Luke's Gospel to the influence of the Holy Spirit has made his first opus known as the "gospel of the Holy Spirit," and for the same reason his second work, The Acts of the Apostles, has been called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit." Other distinctive characteristics of the third Gospel may well be subsumed under Renan's illustrious description: "the most beautiful book in the world."

Main divisions of the Gospel of St. Luke are:

1. Prologue, 1, 1-4
2. The Infancy Narrative, 1, 5—2, 52
3. The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee, 3, 1—9, 50
4. The Journey through Samaria to Jerusalem, 9, 51—18, 14
5. Teachings and Predictions, 18, 15—19, 48
6. The Ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem, 20—21
7. The Passion and Resurrection Narrative, 22—24

PROLOGUE

1

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to draw up a narrative concerning the things that have been fulfilled among
2 us, even as they who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and
3 ministers of the word have handed them down to us, | I also have determined, after following up all things carefully from the very first, to write for thee, most excellent Theophilus,
4 an orderly account, | that thou mayest understand the certainty of the words in which thou hast been instructed.

PRELUDE

THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR

5 *Annunciation of the Baptist* In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zachary, of the course of Abia; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron,
6 and her name was Elizabeth. Both were just before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances
7 of the Lord. But they had no son, for Elizabeth was barren; and they were both advanced in years.
8 Now it came to pass, while he was officiating in the order of his course as priest before God, | according to the custom of the priest's office, that he was chosen by lot to enter
10 the temple of the Lord to burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of

1, 1-4: As others have undertaken to write gospels, Lk determines to write a Gospel too. He intends to strengthen the faith of his readers by giving them a more extensive account of Christ's words and deeds than it had been done before. *Theophilus*: means "God saves." The evangelist most probably imitates Hellenistic writers by speaking to his readers through a single person, real or imaginary, to whom he dedicates his work.

1, 5—2, 7: Lk divided this section into two diptychs. One diptych depicts the annunciation scenes (of John the Baptist and of Jesus), the other the nativity scenes (of the Baptist and of Jesus) and both are linked by the visitation scene.

1, 5: *Herod*: on Herod the Great see "Political Background" in Introduction to the New Testament. *Judea*: here it means all Palestine. *Zachary, of the course of Abia*: see "Religious Background" in Introduction to the New Testament. *Elizabeth*: her ancestors were also priests.

1, 9: *Chosen . . . to burn incense*: an honor given a priest only once in a lifetime.

1, 10: *The hour of incense*: it may have been at the morning or evening sacrifice.

- 11 incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord,
 12 standing at the right of the altar of incense. And Zachary,
 seeing him, was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
- 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zachary,
 for thy petition has been heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall
 14 bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John. And
 thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at
 15 his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord; he shall
 drink no wine or strong drink, and shall be filled with the
 16 Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And he shall bring
 back to the Lord their God many of the children of Israel, |
 17 and he shall himself go before him in the spirit and power of
 Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the
 incredulous to the wisdom of the just; to prepare for the
 Lord a perfect people."
- 18 And Zachary said to the angel, "How shall I know this?
 For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years."
- 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel,
 who stand in the presence of God; and I have been sent
 20 to speak to thee and to bring thee this good news. And be-
 hold, thou shalt be dumb and unable to speak until the day
 when these things come to pass, because thou has not be-
 lieved my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."
- 21 And the people were waiting for Zachary, and they won-
 22 dered at his tarrying so long in the temple. But when he did
 come out he could not speak to them, and they realized that
 he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs
 to them, but he remained dumb.
- 23 And it came to pass, when the days of his service were
 24 completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after
 these days Elizabeth his wife conceived, and she secluded

1, 11: *Angel*: see Mt 1, 20 n for the interpretation of the angel as a personification of God's Providence.

1, 15-16: These are some of the requirements of the Nazirite vow. See Nm 6, 1-21 n. *Strong drink*: intoxicating liquor. *Filled with the Holy Spirit*: A not very well acceptable opinion deduces from this verse and from vv. 41, 44 that the Baptist was purified from original sin and obtained the use of reason. Contrary to that opinion, it is said that the evangelist's use of "Holy Spirit" usually signifies the gift of prophecy. Due to this gift, the Baptist will convert many. *Even from his mother's womb*: just when the Baptist received the gift of prophecy depends on how literally Lk intended this expression.

1, 17: The Baptist, fortified with the prophetic spirit like Elias, will "go before" the Lord as his herald (see 1, 76).

1, 19: *Who stand in the presence of God*: this is probably not an honorary office but an Hebraic expression for one who serves.

25 herself for five months, saying, | "Thus has the Lord dealt with me in the days when he deigned to take away my reproach among men."

26 *Annunciation of the Savior* Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, | to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And when the angel had come to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." When she had heard him she was troubled at his word, and kept pondering what manner of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call

1, 25: A characteristic Old Testament sentiment (Gn 30, 23).
1, 26-38: These verses are used for the Gospel at Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation, and on five other feasts.

1, 26: *In the sixth month*: of Elizabeth's pregnancy. See 1, 24. *Nazareth*: see Mt 2, 23 n.

1, 27: *Mary*: a common name in her day, but there are over sixty theories on the etymological meaning of the Hebrew name, Mary.

1, 28: *Hail*: the Greek word means joy, but the equivalent Aramaic greeting means peace. *Full of grace*: an expression of divine favor used only once more in the New Testament (Eph 1, 6). The probable meaning is that Mary personifies grace since the expression substitutes for her name. She is greeted "full of grace" because the Lord is with her. This text, without containing later Marian dogma, may be viewed as the foundation of the later defined dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption. *Blessed . . . among women*: the phrase most probably slipped into this verse from v. 42. (The legend which told that Mary was brought to the temple at the age of three years and lived there for eleven years originated in the eighth century.)

1, 29: *When she heard him*: not in the original text.

1, 31-35: Scholars admit that Mary learned she was to be the mother of the Messiah, but they dispute whether she knew that he would also be divine. The common long-standing opinion claims that Mary knew of her son's divinity. One scriptural presentation of this opinion is as follows: although the expressions "Son of the Most High" and "Son of God" do not necessarily mean a divine son, yet if Jesus is to be king "forever" (v. 32) and his kingdom is to have "no end" (v. 33), then he must be God. The main objection to this kind of interpretation is: the expressions "forever" and "no end" are taken too literally. According to one recent opinion (Lyonnnet), Mary received an initial faith in the divinity of her son. The "overshadowing" of the Holy Spirit (v. 35) signified to Mary: the Old Testament cloud of God's presence (Ex 40, 35) will enter her womb "and therefore"—precisely because her womb will be God's dwelling—"the Holy One to be born" will be God himself. This is a probable opinion even though it may be reading too much into the

- 32 his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the
- 33 house of Jacob forever; | and of his kingdom there shall be no end."
- 34 But Mary said to the angel, "How shall this happen, since I do not know man?"
- 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born
- 36 shall be called the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman also has conceived a son in her old age, and
- 37 she who was called barren is now in her sixth month; | for nothing shall be impossible with God."
- 38 But Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

word "overshadowing." The value of this opinion is that it explains how Mary could have learned of her son's divinity through Semitic thought patterns. Another recent opinion maintains that Mary did not even have an initial faith in Christ's divinity at the annunciation. She gradually grew in the knowledge of her son's divinity. The knowledge came to full bloom only at Pentecost. The strongest argument adduced is that in recording the temple scene (2, 50), the evangelist himself writes: "they (Mary and Joseph) did not understand the word that he (Jesus) spoke to them." In reply to this opinion, however, it may be stated: the expression "and they did not understand" could mean that they did not understand Christ's sudden change of conduct in going off on his own, even though he was divine. See 2, 49 n. Nevertheless, barring this weak scriptural answer, there is no strict scriptural refutation of, nor strict theological objection to this recent opinion. It remains a moot question whether the Fathers of the Church are unanimous in the teaching that Mary knew of her son's divinity at the annunciation, and whether papal writings are clear on this point.

1, 32-33: On the allusion to Nathan's prophecy, see 2, 52 n.

1, 34: "To know man" is an Hebraic expression for "to have sexual intercourse." Of at least eight current opinions on the precise meaning of Mary's question, the common opinion says: her question indicates that she had previously made a proposal of virginity which she felt obliged to keep. The main objection to this opinion is: if Mary resolved to remain a virgin, why did she get engaged and did intend to marry? Without claiming to answer satisfactorily, the advocates of the common opinion reply that marriage with a man as Joseph provided the safest protection of Mary's virginity.

1, 35: See Mt 1, 18 n on how this differs from similar pagan stories.

1, 38: *The angel*: see Mt 1, 20 n.

39 *The Visitation* Now in those days Mary arose and went
 40 with haste into the hill country, to a town of Juda. And she
 41 entered the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth. And it
 came to pass, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,
 that the babe in her womb leapt. And Elizabeth was filled with
 42 the Holy Spirit, | and cried out with a loud voice, saying,
 "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of
 43 thy womb! And how have I deserved that the mother of my
 44 Lord should come to me? For behold, the moment that the
 sound of thy greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb
 45 leapt for joy. And blessed is she who has believed, because
 the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished."
 46 And Mary said,
 47 "My soul magnifies the Lord, | and my spirit rejoices in

1, 39: Mary visited Elizabeth shortly after the annunciation and before Joseph saw her condition (Mt 1, 19ff n). *A town of Juda*: Ain Karim, about five miles southwest of Jerusalem, is the village which from only the sixth century on is held to be referred to here.

1, 41-45: Through the gift of prophecy (see 1, 15-16 n) Elizabeth learns that the movement of the child in her womb was not natural. Furthermore, she understands the message of the annunciation and praises Mary's faith.

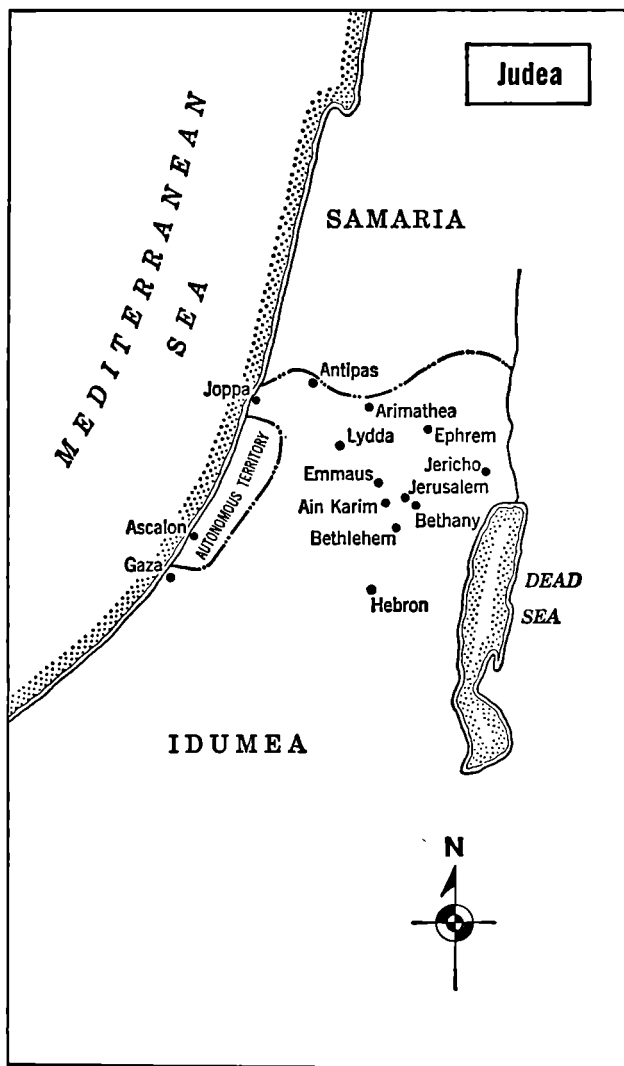
1, 42: *Blessed . . . among women*: the Hebraic superlative for most blessed.

1, 43: *The mother of my Lord*: Elizabeth acknowledges Mary to be the mother of the Messiah. See 2 Sm 24, 21 for this expression. Principally because of the queen mother's status of importance in the ancient Near East and in the Old Testament, a probable opinion considers Elizabeth's words "the mother of my Lord" to indicate that the queenship of Mary was a devotion among the early Christians even before the evangelist wrote this account.

1, 44: *Joy*: to be taken metaphorically, for otherwise it would have to be interpreted that the "babe" had the use of reason, without which it could not have experienced joy at meeting Mary.

1, 46-55: Except for vv. 48b and 49a, the Canticum ("The Magnificat") is a chain of reminiscences from the psalms and especially from the Canticum of Anna. See 1 Sm 2, 1-10 n. Consequently, the Canticum does not contain any specifically Christian idea, and it is not exceptional for its literary qualities. Yet it is a high point in Old Testament poor folk spirituality. See the Old Testament volume, page 1667 (paragraph 3), and the chart on page 1666. The long-standing opinion among Catholics according to which the *Magnificat* is a Greek translation of a canticum composed by Mary in Aramaic and spoken by her at the visitation is giving way to this minority view: the canticum is not a verbatim rendering of Mary's words, but the evangelist's adaptation of the true sentiments expressed by Mary at the visitation. He may have obtained knowledge of some of these sentiments from Mary herself and some from another source or other sources.

1, 46: *Mary said*: it is almost unanimously agreed upon that the original text reads "Mary" and not Elizabeth.



48 God my Savior; because he has regarded the lowliness of his
 49 handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call
 50 me blessed; | because he who is mighty has done great
 51 things for me, and holy is his name; | and his mercy is from
 52 generation to generation on those who fear him. He has
 53 shown might with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the
 54 conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from
 55 their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the
 56 hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away
 empty. He has given help to Israel, his servant, mindful of
 his mercy—even as he spoke to our fathers—to Abraham
 and to his posterity forever.”

And Mary remained with her about three months and re-
 turned to her own house.

57 *Birth of the Baptist* Now Elizabeth's time was fulfilled
 that she should be delivered, and she brought forth a son.
 58 And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had
 magnified his mercy towards her, and they rejoiced with her.
 59 And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to
 circumcise the child, and they were going to call him by his
 60 father's name, Zachary. And his mother answered and said,
 “Not so, but he shall be called John.”

61 And they said to her, “There is none of thy kindred that
 62 is called by this name.” And they kept inquiring by signs
 63 of his father what he would have him called. And asking
 for a writing-tablet he wrote the words, “John is his name.”

64 And they all marvelled. | And immediately his mouth was
 opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak, blessing
 65 God. And fear came on all their neighbors; and all these
 66 things were spoken abroad in all the hill country of Judea. And
 all who heard them laid them up in their heart, saying,
 “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord
 67 was with him. And Zachary his father was filled with the
 Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

1, 55: The verse links the promises made by God to Abraham with Mary's conceiving the Messiah in her womb (v. 31).

1, 56: See 1, 39 n.

1, 64-66: Some scholars believe that the Canticum of Zachary in vv. 68-79 was added as an amplification of vv. 64-66. Besides, the repetition of “his father” in v. 67 (already said in 1, 59) seems to indicate that the canticum was inserted because v. 66 can smoothly continue with v. 80.

- 68 "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has
 visited and wrought redemption for his people, | and has
 69 raised up a horn of salvation for us, in the house of David
 70 his servant, | as he promised through the mouth of his holy
 71 ones, the prophets from of old; | salvation from our enemies,
 72 and from the hand of all who hate us, | to show mercy to
 73 our forefathers and to be mindful of his holy covenant, | of
 the oath that he swore to Abraham our father, that he would
 74 grant us, | that, delivered from the hand of our enemies, we
 75 should serve him without fear, | in holiness and justice before
 76 him all our days. And thou, child, shalt be called the proph-
 et of the Most High, for thou shalt go before the face of
 77 the Lord to prepare his ways, | to give to his people knowl-
 78 edge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins, | because
 of the loving kindness of our God, wherewith the Orient
 79 from on high has visited us, | to shine on those who sit in
 darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into
 the way of peace."
 80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and was
 in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

2

- 1 *The Birth of Jesus* Now it came to pass in those days, that
 a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of

1, 68-79: This canticle, known as the *Benedictus* (from the translation of the first word of the hymn in the Latin Vg), is a rosary of quotations mostly from the psalms, at least up to v. 73. The Jewish prayer *Schemone Esre* from pre-Christian times, and still said by Jews, is often compared with this canticle. There are three theories on the composition of the *Benedictus* and the *Nunc dimittis* (2, 29-32): 1. The canticles were composed by Zachary and Simeon. 2. Although the canticles manifest the orally expressed sentiments of Zachary and Simeon, they were written by a later poet, maybe the evangelist. 3. Lk wrote them after Pentecost, yet they were to express the sentiments of Zachary and Simeon.

1, 68-75: Zachary thanks God for the Messiah.

1, 68: *Visited*: God intervened in human history.

1, 69: *A horn*: a metaphor for power. God has given his people a powerful Messiah.

1, 76-79: Zachary thanks God for the mission granted to his son.

1, 76: The child will be God's herald as promised in 1, 17.

1, 79: *The Orient*: the Rising Sun, a title of the Messiah. *Has visited us*: will visit us. *Darkness . . . death*: the Messiah will illumine those who are in sin. *Peace*: see 2, 14 n.

2, 1-3: Catholics generally explain that Luke is speaking of a census ordered by Caesar Augustus for the Roman empire ("the whole world"), though not to be conducted at the same time throughout the empire.

(Continued on page 221.)

LUKE 1-2: A MIDRASH

Our annotations to Lk 1-2 presuppose that the literary form of these chapters consists in some variety of historical writing.

The following is a summary of the opinion of R. Laurentin, which has been followed by many Catholics in recent years, that Lk 1-2 are an haggadic midrash. (For definition see Mt 1, 18-2, 23 n.)

Luke is meditatively alluding to Dn 9 and Mal 3, but especially to Gabriel's announcement to Daniel of the Messiah's coming in seventy weeks (of years). See Dn 9, 24 n. In Lk 1, 5-2, 22 there are exactly seventy weeks from Gabriel's announcement to Zachary (1, 5ff) to the presentation of the Messiah in the temple (2, 22ff). This meditative allusion to Daniel seems to be Lk's peculiar literary expression of the fulfillment of Daniel's Messianic prophecy.

The evangelist meditates on other Old Testament texts. In depicting the annunciation scene, he alludes mainly to So 3, 14-17 wherein Israel is addressed as the Daughter of Sion. There are three remarkable similarities between Sophonia's oracle and the annunciation: 1. The announcement of the Messianic joy with "rejoice." 2. The expression "fear not." 3. Yahweh is coming to Jerusalem as Savior-King. The evangelist makes two alterations: he changes the message addressed to the Daughter of Sion into an address to Mary "full of grace"; secondly, it is Jesus, the Son of the Most High, who is coming as Savior-King to reside in Mary.

Furthermore, "The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father . . ." (Lk 1, 32f) is an allusion to Nathan's prophecy. See 2 Sm 7, 8-16 n. This allusion is obvious even to those who do not follow the midrashic interpretation.

A comparison between the midrash of Lk 1—2 and that of Mt 1—2 reveals: 1. In the account of Mt the references to the Old Testament are explicit; in Lk they are implicit. 2. The apologetic purpose of Mt is to prove that Christ accomplished the prophecies of the Old Testament; Lk is content to meditate on the mystery of the birth and infancy of Christ by allusions to the Old Testament. 3. The choice of the infancy episodes and of the Old Testament texts differ greatly in both Mt and Lk.

The historical nucleus common to Mt 1—2 and Lk 1—2 comprises four truths: the virginal conception; the imposition of the name of Jesus; the birth at Bethlehem; the infancy at Nazareth. Beyond this nucleus, each evangelist develops his own episodes and other historical truths.

- 2 the whole world should be taken. This first census took
 3 place while Cyrenus was governor of Syria. And all were
 going, each to his own town, to register.
 4 And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of
 Nazareth into Judea to the town of David, which is called
 Bethlehem—because he was of the house and family of
 5 David—to register, together with Mary his espoused wife,
 6 who was with child. And it came to pass while they were
 there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled.
 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him
 in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because
 there was no room for them in the inn.

8 *The Shepherds at the Crib* And there were shepherds in

This universal census is referred to by "this first census took place while Cyrenus was governor of Syria." Standard objections are: 1. Augustus never ordered such a census. In answer to this objection, it is proposed that such a decree is historically probable from 12 B.C. to 7 B.C. 2. Palestine was not then, in 6 B.C., a part of the Roman empire and, therefore, the census would not have been conducted there. A proposed answer to this is: although Herod was legally independent, in practice he was a puppet of Rome. 3. The census could not have been conducted according to the place of origin as described by Lk (vv. 4-5), but according to residence. Proposed reply: there was the Egyptian practice of registering according to the place of origin. 4. According to Josephus, the census under Cyrenus occurred in 6 A.D. when he was governor or legate in Syria. Lk, however, seems to be speaking about 6 B.C. In answer, it is proposed that Cyrenus may have been legate twice—once in 6 A.D., and at an earlier time between 12 and 8 B.C., which would square with the evangelist's text.

The weak answers to the standard objections show that the census of Cyrenus remains an unsolved historical problem. Other general theories, advanced to solve the problem, have not proven satisfactory.

2, 4: *Joseph*: nothing in the Gospels lends support to the theory that Joseph was an old man. Besides, every representation found in the first four centuries show him as a beardless young man. The old age theory seems to have originated in the fourth century for the purpose of protecting the doctrine of Mary's virginity. Had Joseph been an old man, the disproportionate age would have brought ridicule on Mary.

2, 7: *Firstborn son*: this was a term for the first male child because he was to be consecrated to God. See Ex 13, 2. The term in itself does not necessarily mean that other children were born to the woman in question. It could easily mean an only child, as it reads on a Jewish tomb, dated about 5 B.C., whereon the same expression, "firstborn son" is inscribed in Greek about a mother who died in childbirth. *Wrapped . . . laid*: in the evangelist's words, the birth of Christ does not seem miraculous, but as having occurred in poor and humble circumstances. See Is 1, 3 n on the ox and ass. *Manger*: basing their theories on St. Jerome's description of this manger "of

- the same district living in the fields and keeping watch o
 9 their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord sto
 by them and the glory of God shone round about them, a
 they feared exceedingly.
- 10 And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for
 hold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be
 11 all the people; | for today in the town of David a Sav
 12 has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord. And this sh
 be a sign to you: you will find an infant wrapped in sw
 13 dling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly th
 was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host prais
 God and saying,
 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace amon
 men of good will."
- 15 And it came to pass, when the angels had departed fro
 them into heaven, that the shepherds were saying to e
 another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thi
 that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known
 us."
- 16 So they went with haste, and they found Mary a
 17 Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when th
 had seen, they understood what had been told them co
 18 cerning this child. And all who heard marvelled at t
 19 things told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept in mi
 20 all these things, pondering them in her heart. And t
 shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all th
 they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken to them.

baked clay" and on customs in Palestine (where wood has alwa
 been scarce), archeologists believe that Christ was laid in a c
 trough which was hewn out like a niche in the wall. They righ
 deny the genuineness of the five small boards venerated as Chris
 crib in the church of St. Mary Major (Rome).

The notion that Jesus was born in a stable came from the Gre
 word itself, which can be translated "stable" instead of "crib" or "ma
 ger." But the notion that Jesus was born in a cave had its origin w
 Justin (150 A.D.) who situated the cave outside of Bethlehem. Jus
 probably derived this notion from Is 16, 33 (Sep.). The fourth c
 tury Constantinian church was built near such a cave, and its remain
 constitute the oldest Christian church in the world. The Emper
 Hadrian (117-138) built a pagan temple over the site to desecrate
 The celebration of Christ's birth on December 25 began in the four
 century to replace the feasts celebrating the rebirth of various sun go

2, 9: *Angel*: see Mt 1, 20 n.

2, 11: *Christ*: Messiah.

2, 14: *The highest*: high heaven. *Peace*: this characteristic gift
 Messianic times signifies material and spiritual welfare for t
 individual and for the community.

- 21 *Circumcision and Presentation* And when eight days were fulfilled for his circumcision, his name was called Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
- 22 And when the days of her purification were fulfilled according to the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord—as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”— | and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.”
- 23 And behold, there was in Jerusalem a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.
- 24 And he came by inspiration of the Spirit into the temple. And when his parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he also received him into his arms and blessed God, saying,
- 25 “Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: |

2, 21: A reference to 1, 31 where the angel says that the name of Mary's son will be Jesus.

2, 22: The mother of a male child could not fulfill this obligation till after forty days. See Lv 12, 3ff.

2, 23: A free quotation from Ex 13, 2.

2, 24: See Lv 12, 8.

2, 25: *Simeon*: otherwise unknown. Other New Testament people are called by the Greek equivalent, Simon. Simeon, who had received the charismatic gift of prophecy, was a typically pious person, patiently waiting the Messianic era (“the consolation of Israel”). This verse is reminiscent of a Jewish saying, “If this is not true, may I not see the Consolation.”

2, 26: *See death*: experience death. Simeon is generally conjectured to be an old man solely because of this verse and of his canticle.

2, 28: *He also received him*: Simeon does not seem to have been the officiating priest. See 2, 34 n. When the parents of Jesus brought him into the temple, Simeon knew through a revelation of the Holy Spirit that the child was the Messiah, since Mary and Joseph do not seem to have informed him.

2, 29-32: The hymn is known as the *Nunc dimittis* from its first words in Latin. For its composition see 1, 68-79 n. Simeon can be compared with the sentinel in the opening scene of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.

2, 31-32: These verses are mostly based on random parts of Isaiah.

2, 31: *Before the face of*: in the sight of.

- 32 a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for people Israel."
- 33 And his father and mother were marvelling at the things
34 spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said
to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for
fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that
35 shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall
pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed
36 There was also Anna, a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel
of the tribe of Aser. She was of a great age, having lived
37 with her husband seven years from her maidenhood, and
herself as a widow to eighty-four years. She never left
temple, with fastings and prayers worshipping night and
38 day. And coming up at that very hour, she began to give
praise to the Lord, and spoke of him to all who were awaiting
the redemption of Jerusalem.
- 39 And when they had fulfilled all things prescribed in
Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, into their own
40 town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong.
He was full of wisdom and the grace of God was upon him.
- 41 *The Child Jesus in the Temple* And his parents were wont
to go every year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover.
42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem
43 according to the custom of the feast. And after they
had fulfilled the days, when they were returning, the child
Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents did not know
44 it. But thinking that he was in the caravan, they had come
day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him.

2, 32: See Acts 13, 47 n.

2, 34: *Blessed*: it does not follow from the blessing that Simeon was a priest. *Destined for the fall and for the rise of many*: the child will be an occasion for the spiritual ruin and the cause for the salvation of many.

2, 35: The sword of the persecution of Jesus will bring suffering on Mary, and the persecution will result in the revealing of many thoughts, i.e., whether they will follow or reject Christ. (Same idea in v. 34.)

2, 36: *A prophetess*: not one who predicts but one who speaks about God.

2, 37: *From her maidenhood*: from the time of her marriage. Till she lived as a widow till she was eighty-four years old. *She never left the temple . . . night and day*: a hyperbolic way of saying she visited the temple daily, not that she literally made her home there.

2, 39: For the same return to Nazareth see Mt 2, 23.

2, 40: *The grace of God*: the favor of God.

2, 41: See Dt 16, 16.

- 45 among their relatives and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him.
- 46 And it came to pass after three days, that they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening
- 47 to them and asking them questions. And all who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding and his
- 48 answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, in sorrow thy father and I have been seeking thee."
- 49 And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"
- 50 And they did not understand the word that he spoke to them.
- 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them; and his mother kept all these
- 52 things carefully in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men.

I. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

1

3

- 1 *John the Baptist* Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother

2, 49: These are the first words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. *I must be about my Father's business*: the majority of modern scholars translates: "Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?" Both translations are grammatically possible. Since the scene occurs in the temple (see v. 46), the latter translation is favored. In other words, Jesus replies in effect: Why were you looking all over for me? Did you not know that I would not be in any other place than in the temple? Regardless of whichever is correct, neither translation answers Mary's question why he suddenly decided to leave without telling his parents. In his reply, though cryptic, Jesus at least clearly asserts a certain independence from his parents, and his decision to do as he pleases. Those who hold that Mary did not know of her son's divinity at the annunciation (see 1, 31-35 n) explain that she was unable to comprehend his declaration of independence since she did not understand that Jesus was divine and because of his divinity he could rightfully make this declaration.

2, 52: *Wisdom and age*: see "Christ's Knowledge" at the end of the Introduction to the Gospels. *Grace*: favor.

3, 1-18: See par Mt 3, 1-12.

3, 1-2: This is an example of the correct terminology adopted by Lk from the Hellenistic style of his day.

3, 1: *Procurator*: governor. See map, Palestine according to Luke, p. 228.

AN APPROXIMATE ORDERING OF EVENT: IN THE TWO INFANCY NARRATIVES

Narrative	Text
Annunciation of John the Baptist	Lk 1, 5-25
Annunciation of the Savior	Lk 1, 26-38
Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth	Lk 1, 39-56
The birth of John the Baptist	Lk 1, 57-80
The doubt of Joseph	Mt 1, 18-24
The birth of Jesus	Lk 2, 1-7 Mt 1, 25
The shepherds at the crib	Lk 2, 8-20
The circumcision	Lk 2, 21
The presentation	Lk 2, 22-38
Visit of the Magi	Mt 2, 1-12
Flight into Egypt	Mt 2, 13-15
The massacre of the innocents	Mt 2, 16-18
The return to Nazareth from Egypt	Mt 2, 19-23
The child Jesus in the temple	Lk 2, 41-52

tetrarch of the district of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Ly-
 2 sanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas
 and Caiphas, the word of God came to John, the son of
 3 Zachary, in the desert. And he went into all the region about
 the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the for-
 4 givenness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of
 Isaias the prophet,

"The voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make ready the
 5 way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall
 be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low,
 and the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough
 6 ways smooth; | and all mankind shall see the salvation of
 God.' "

7 He said therefore to the crowds that went out to be
 baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! who has shown you
 8 how to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore
 fruits befitting repentance, and do not begin to say, 'We
 have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that God
 is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.
 9 For even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees; every
 tree, therefore, that is not bringing forth fruit is to be cut
 down and thrown into the fire."

10 And the crowds asked him, saying, "What then are we to
 11 do?" And he answered and said to them, "Let him who has
 two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who
 has food do likewise."

12 And publicans also came to be baptized, and they said
 13 to him, "Master, what are we to do?" But he said to them,
 "Exact no more than what has been appointed you."

14 And soldiers also asked him, saying, "And we—what are
 we to do?" And he said to them, "Plunder no one, accuse no
 one falsely, and be content with your pay."

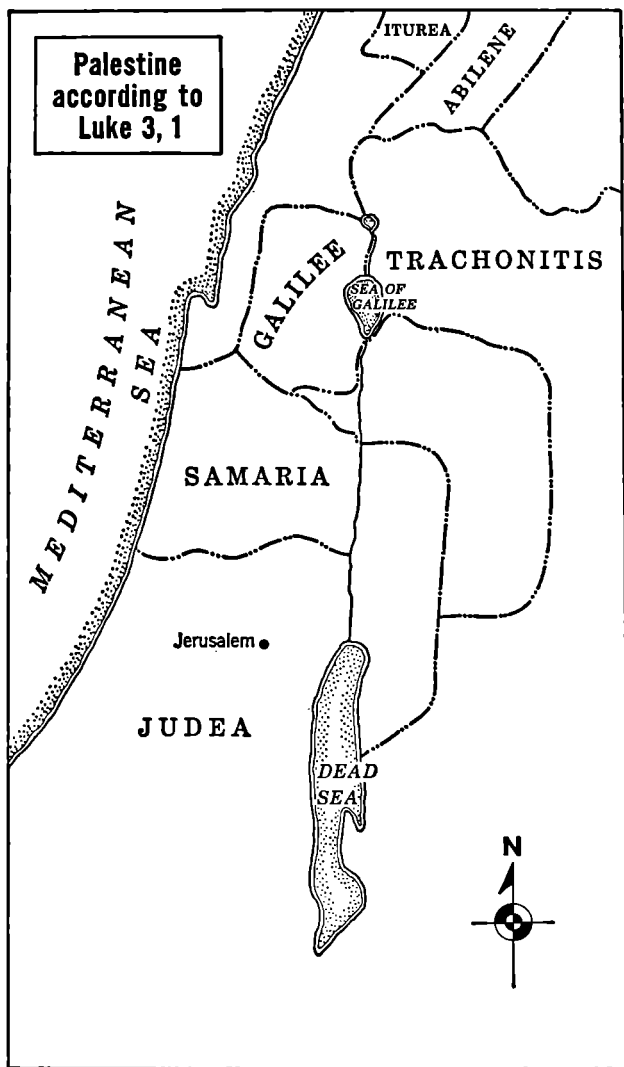
15 Now as the people were in expectation, and all were won-
 dering in their hearts about John, whether perhaps he might
 16 be the Christ, | John addressed them, saying to all, "I indeed
 baptize you with water. But one mightier than I is coming,
 the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loose. He will
 17 baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing

3, 2: *Annas*: see Acts 4, 6 n.

3, 5-6: Lk quotes more of Isaias than do Mt and Mk. See Is 40, 3-5.

3, 4: *The voice of one crying*: voice of a herald.

3, 12-14: Of the three parallel passages it is Lk's alone that mentions two of the classes of people whom the Baptist addressed. He preached to the tax collectors against extortion, and to the soldiers against using unlawful means to supplement their wages.



fan is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will
 18 burn up with unquenchable fire." So with many different exhortations he kept on preaching the gospel to the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him concerning Herodias, his brother's wife, and concerning all the evil
 20 things that Herod had done, crowned all this by shutting up John in prison.

21 *The Baptism of Jesus* Now it came to pass when all the people had been baptized, Jesus also having been baptized
 22 and being in prayer, that heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

23 *Genealogy of Jesus* And Jesus himself, when he began his work, was about thirty years of age, being—as was supposed
 24 the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, | the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janne, the son of
 25 Joseph, | the son of Matthatias, the son of Amos, the son of Naum, the son of Esli, the son of Nagge, | the son of
 26 Maath, the son of Matthatias, the son of Semei, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, | the son of Joanna, the son of Resa,
 27 the son of Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Neri, | the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the
 28 son of Elmadam, the son of Her, | the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of
 29 Levi, | the son of Simeon, the son of Judas, the son of Joseph, the son of Jona, the son of Eliachim, | the son of Melea, the
 30 son of Menna, the son of Matthata, the son of Nathan, the son of David, | the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of
 31 Booz, the son of Salmon, the son of Naasson, | the son of Aminadab, the son of Aram, the son of Esron, the son of
 32 Phares, the son of Judas, | the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Thare, the son of Nachor, |
 33 the son of Seruch, the son of Ragau, the son of Phalec, the son of Eber, the son of Sale, | the son of Cainan, the son of
 34 Arphaxad, the son of Sem, the son of Noe, the son of Lamech, | the son of Mathusale, the son of Enoch, the son

3, 19-20: For the complete story of the Baptist's imprisonment and death see Mt 14, 3-12 and Mk 6, 17-29.

3, 21-22: For par see Mt 3, 13-17 n.

3, 23-38: For par see Mt 1, 1-17 n.

38 of Jared, the son of Malaleel, the son of Cainan, | the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, who was of God.

4

1 *The Temptation* Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit about the
2 desert | for forty days, being tempted the while by the devil. And he ate nothing those days, and when they were completed he was hungry.

3 And the devil said to him, "If thou art the Son of God,
4 command that this stone become a loaf of bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word of God.'"

5 And the devil led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And he said to him, "To thee will I give all this power and their glory; for to me they have been delivered, and to whomever I
7 will I give them. Therefore if thou wilt worship before me,
8 the whole shall be thine." And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'The Lord thy God shalt thou worship, and him only shalt thou serve.'"

9 Then he led him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If thou art the Son of God,
10 throw thyself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge concerning thee, to preserve thee'; and,
11 'Upon their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

13 And when the devil had tried every temptation, he departed from him for a while.

2

14 *Jesus at Nazareth* And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and the fame of him went out through the

4, 1-13: For par see Mt 4, 1-11 n.

4, 9-10: Lk differs from Mt by reversing the order of the second and third temptations.

4, 13: *For a while*: this phrase is commonly interpreted as an allusion to Satan's final attack on Jesus through others at the Passion, e.g., through Judas (22, 3); through the chief priests (22, 52-53).

4, 14-15: The first three evangelists situate the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee after the episode of the temptations.

- 15 whole country. And he taught in their synagogues, and was honored by all.
- 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and according to his custom, he entered the synagogue on
- 17 the Sabbath and stood up to read. And the volume of Isaías the prophet was handed to him, and after he opened the volume, he found the place where it was written,
- 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he has anointed
- 19 me; | to bring good news to the poor he has sent me, to proclaim to the captives release, and sight to the blind; | to set at liberty the oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense."
- 20 And closing the volume, he gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were
- 21 gazing on him. But he began to say to them, "Today this
- 22 Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all bore him witness, and marvelled at the words of grace that came from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"
- 23 And he said to them, "You will surely quote me this proverb, 'Physician, cure thyself! Whatever things we have heard of as done in Capharnaum, do here also in thy own
- 24 country!' " | But he said, "Amen I say to you, no prophet
- 25 is acceptable in his own country. In truth I say to you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elias, when heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and
- 26 a great famine came over all the land; | and to none of them was Elias sent, but rather to a widowed woman in
- 27 Sarepta of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

4, 16-30: This introduction announces that the ministry of Jesus will be one of mercy (vv. 18-19) and that he will be rejected by the Jews (vv. 28-30); it also insinuates that he will be accepted by the Gentiles (vv. 24-27).

4, 16-24: See par Mt 13, 53-58.

4, 18-19: See Is 61, 1-2 n.

4, 20: *Sat down*: the common posture of a preacher.

4, 21-22: It is usually held that these verses express the people's amazement at the declaration of one of their own to be the expected Messiah, and their dismay because they had mistakenly hoped for a political Messiah.

4, 23: *Country*: Nazareth.

4, 25-26: The incident is related in 3 Kgs 17, 8-24.

4, 25: *Heaven was shut up for three years and six months*: Jas 5, 17 states the same length of the drought which renders "in the third year of 3 Kgs 18, 1 more precise. *All the land*: the countryside.

4, 27: For this event see 4 Kgs 5, 1-14.

28 And all in the synagogue, as they heard these things,
 29 were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him forth
 out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill, on
 which their town was built, that they might throw him down
 30 headlong. But he, passing through their midst, went his way.
 31 And he went down to Capharnaum, a town of Galilee.
 32 And there he was teaching them on the Sabbath. | And they
 were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with
 authority.

33 *The Cure of a Demoniac* Now in the synagogue there was
 a man possessed by an unclean devil, and he cried out with
 34 a loud voice, | saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with
 thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Hast thou come to destroy us? I
 35 know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." | And Jesus
 rebuked him, saying, "Hold thy peace, and go out of him."
 And when the devil had thrown him down into the midst, he
 36 went out of him, without harming him at all. And amazement
 came upon all, and they discussed it with one another, saying,
 "What is this word? For with authority and power he com-
 37 mands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And rumor
 concerning him went forth into every place of the region
 roundabout.

38 *Peter's Mother-in-law* But he rose from the synagogue
 and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was
 suffering from a great fever, and they besought him for her.

4, 29: *The brow of the hill*: two places have been proposed as the location of this site, but both proposals lack sufficient justification.

4, 30: Since Jesus rarely used his miraculous powers for his own convenience, one must not necessarily think that he escaped miraculously here. The evangelist may simply be saying: no one could harm Jesus because his time to die had not yet come (compare 9, 51).

4, 31-37: The principal message is: Jesus conquers the devils. See par Mk 1, 21-28.

4, 31: The evangelists never mention the returning of Jesus to Nazareth.

4, 34: *The Holy One of God*: neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is this title known to apply to the Messiah. It means a man who is especially close to God.

4, 35: *Into the midst*: of the people.

4, 36: *What is this word?*: see par Mk 1, 27: "What new doctrine is this?"

4, 38-39: See par Mt 8, 14-15.

4, 38: *A great fever*: see the Introduction to this Gospel on the medical terms reflecting the evangelist's profession.

39 And standing over her he rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she rose at once and began to wait on them.

40 *Other Miracles* Now when the sun was setting, all who had persons sick with various diseases brought them to him. And he laid his hands upon each of them and cured them.

41 And devils also came forth from many, crying out and saying, "Thou art the Son of God." And he rebuked them, and did not permit them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

42 Now when it was day, he went out and departed into a desert place. And the crowds were seeking after him, and they came to him, and tried to detain him, that he might not depart from them. | But he said to them, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the kingdom of God, for this is why I have been sent." And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

5

1 *The First Disciples Called* Now it came to pass, while the crowds were pressing upon him to hear the word of God, that he was standing by Lake Genesareth. And he saw two boats moored by the lake, but the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. And getting into one of their boats, the one that was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And sitting down, he began to teach the crowds from the boat. But when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and lower your nets for a catch."

2 And Simon answered and said to him, "Master, the whole

4, 39: *The fever*: see Mt 8, 14 n.

4, 40-41: See par Mt 8, 16-17.

4, 40: *Persons*: friends.

4, 41: *The Christ*: the Messiah.

4, 42-44: See par Mk 1, 35-39.

4, 42: *A desert place*: a lonely place.

4, 43: *This is why I have been sent*: see Mk 1, 38 n.

4, 44: *Galilee*: Judea.

5, 1-11: See Mk 1, 16-20 n.

5, 1: *Lake Genesareth*: this is an example of Lk's frequent method of Hellenizing certain Semitic terms to make them better understandable to his Gentile readers. The common name in the other three Gospels is the Sea or Lake of Galilee.

5, 3: *He began to teach*: he continued to teach.

5, 5: *Master*: only in this Gospel is Jesus called Master. It substitutes for "rabbi" in the other Gospels. This is one more example

- night through we have toiled and have taken nothing; but
 6 at thy word I will lower the net." And when they had done
 so, they enclosed a great number of fishes, but their net was
 7 breaking. And they beckoned to their comrades in the other
 boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both
 the boats, so that they began to sink.
- 8 But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus'
 knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,
 9 O Lord." For he and all who were with him were amazed
 10 at the catch of fish they had made; | and so were also
 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners
 with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid;
 11 henceforth thou shalt catch men." And when they had
 brought their boats to land, they left all and followed him.
- 12 *A Leper* And it came to pass, while he was in one of the
 towns, that, behold, there was a man full of leprosy. And
 when he saw Jesus he fell on his face and besought him,
 13 saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." | And
 stretching forth his hand he touched him, saying, "I will;
 be thou made clean." And immediately the leprosy left
 14 him. | And he charged him to tell no man, but, "Go, show
 thyself to the priest, and offer the gift for thy purification,
 as Moses commanded, for a witness to them."
- 15 But so much the more the tidings spread concerning him,
 and great crowds gathered together to hear him and to be
 16 cured of their sicknesses. But he himself was in retirement
 in the desert, and in prayer.

of the evangelist's Hellenizing of Semitic terms. See Mk 9, 4 n. *Night*: since nighttime is a better time to fish, the abundant catch (v. 6) was all the more astonishing. *I will lower*: this was not only an act of obedience but one of confidence that Jesus could help.

5, 8: *Simon Peter*: this is the only place in Lk where the double name occurs. *I am a sinful man, O Lord*: the trend among Catholic scholars is to interpret that Peter at this time did not believe in Christ as being divine, and most probably not even as being the Messiah, but only as being a holy man of God.

5, 10: Notice how Peter is made the central figure of the entire episode. *Catch men*: some scholars believe that the miraculous catch of fishes was primarily intended by our Lord to indicate symbolically Peter's future role in the Church, and secondarily out of pity. See Mk 1, 17 n on "fishers of men."

5, 12-16: See par Mt 8, 1-4.

5, 12: *Full of leprosy*: see "leper" in Mt 8, 2 n and the Introduction to this Gospel on medical terms reflecting the evangelist's profession.

5, 14: *Tell no man . . . witness to them*: see Mt 8, 4 n.

- 17 And it came to pass on one of the days, that he sat teaching. And there were Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and out of Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.
- 18 *A Paralytic at Capharnaum* And behold, some men were carrying upon a pallet a man who was paralyzed, and they were trying to bring him in and to lay him before him.
- 19 And as they found no way of bringing him in, because of the crowd, they went up onto the roof and lowered him through the tiles, with his pallet, into the midst before Jesus.
- 20 And seeing their faith, he said, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."
- 21 And the Scribes and Pharisees began to argue, saying, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God only?" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, answered and said to them, "Why are you arguing in your hearts? | Which is easier, to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to thee, arise, take up thy pallet and go to thy house."
- 22 And immediately he arose before them, took up what he had been lying on, and went away to his house, glorifying God. And astonishment seized upon them all, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen wonderful things today."

5, 17: *Was present to heal them*: in Greek: made him heal.

5, 18-26: For par see Mt 9, 1-8 n.

5, 19: *Then went up onto the roof*: by an outside staircase, a normal part of an oriental house. *Tiles*: some experts explain that in those days Palestinian houses were not constructed with roof-tiles, but that Lk used this term to be understood by his Greek Gentile readers.

5, 20: *Seeing their faith*: most scholars believe this to mean the faith of the paralytic and of his four bearers as well. See Mt 9, 2 n. 5, 21-23: See Mt 9, 3-7 n.

5, 21: *Who can forgive sins but God only?*: since it is not clearly stated in the Old Testament that the Messiah himself would forgive sins, some biblicists point to Old Testament passages in which forgiveness of sins is foretold as a characteristic of Messianic times. See Jer 31, 34 n; Lk 1, 77.

5, 24: *Son of Man*: see Mt 9, 6 n.

27 *The Call of Levi* And after this he went forth; and he s
a publican, named Levi, sitting in the tax collector's pla
28 and he said to him, "Follow me." And leaving all thin
29 he arose and followed him. And Levi gave a great feast
him at his house; and there was a great gathering of public
30 and of others, who were at the table with them. And t
Pharisees and their Scribes were grumbling, saying to
disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with publicans a
31 sinners?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is r
the healthy who need a physician, but they who are si
32 I have not come to call the just, but sinners, to repentance

33 *The Question of Fasting* Now they said to him, "W
do the disciples of John fast often and make supplication
and likewise those of the Pharisees, whereas thy discip
34 eat and drink?" He said to them, "Can you make the we
35 ding guests fast as long as the bridegroom is with them? B
the days will come—and when the bridegroom shall
taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."
36 And he spoke a parable also to them, "No one puts
patch from a new garment on an old garment; else n
only does he tear the new one, but the patch from the ne
37 garment does not match the old. And no one pours ne
wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst t
38 skins, and will be spilt itself, and the skins ruined. B
new wine must be put into fresh skins, and both are save
39 And no man after drinking old wine immediately desir
new; for he says, 'The old is better.'"

5, 27-32: See par Mt 9, 9-13.

5, 27-28: An acceptable interpretation is that we have here writing the whittled-down essentials of a story after it was orally repeated for years.

5, 27: *Levi*: see Mt 9, 9 n. Since the other disciples (vv. 10-11) could always return to fishing, Mt's decision to follow Christ was more final because he could not easily return to his position as tax collector.

5, 29: *Publicans*: see Mk 2, 15 n.

5, 30: See Mt 9, 11 n on the artificial setting.

5, 33-39: See par Mt 9, 14-17.

5, 33: *They*: see Mt 9, 14 n. In all three parallel accounts the indication of time, place, and circumstances is missing. These details may have been lost in the period of oral transmission from the time Christ to the writing of the Gospels. Regardless, the chief purpose of the narrative is to present Christ's views on fasting.

5, 35: *Bridegroom*: see Mt 9, 15 n.

5, 36-39: For these two parables see Mt 9, 16-17 n.

5, 38: *And both are saved*: not included in the original text.

6

¹ The Disciples Pluck Grain on the Sabbath Now it came to pass on the second first Sabbath, that he was going through standing grain, and his disciples were plucking and eating the ears of grain, rubbing them with their hands. But some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you not, then, read what David did when he and those with him were hungry? | how he entered the house of God, and took, ate, and gave to those who were with him, the loaves of proposition, which no one may lawfully eat except the priests?" And he said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

⁶ A Man with a Withered Hand And it came to pass on another Sabbath, that he entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there and his right hand was withered. And the Scribes and the Pharisees were watching whether he cured on the Sabbath, that they might find how to accuse him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Arise and stand forth in the midst." And he arose and stood forth. | But Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil? to save a life, or to destroy it?" And having looked around upon them all, he said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand." And he stretched it forth, and his hand was restored. But they were filled with fury, and began to discuss among themselves what they should do to Jesus.

¹² The Choice of the Twelve Now it came to pass in those days, that he went out to the mountain to pray, and continued

6, 1-5: See par Mt 12, 1-8. Mt and Lk try to be more literary than Mk is in this account.

6, 1: *The second first Sabbath*: there is no adequate explanation for this expression. Many textual critics delete "second first" since it is omitted in several important Greek manuscripts.

6, 3-4: Jesus refers to 1 Sm 21, 1-6.

6, 5: See Mt 12, 8 n.

6, 6-11: See par Mt 12, 9-14. A recurring Gospel theme is that the legal mentality of the Pharisees hindered them from accepting Christ's claims.

6, 11: Although Ex 31, 14 demanded the death penalty for breaking the Sabbath, the law was apparently not enforced at the time of Jesus nor was he ever formally accused of violating it.

6, 12-16: See table The Twelve Apostles, p. 157.

6, 12: It is typical of Lk to mention Christ praying.

13 all night in prayer to God. And when day broke, he summoned his disciples; and from these he chose twelve (who he also named apostles); Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; | Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who turned traitor.

3

17 *The Sermon on the Mount: The Scene* And coming down with them, he took his stand on a level stretch, with a crowd of his disciples, and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, | who came to listen to him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd were trying to touch him, for power went forth from him and healed all.

20 *The Beatitudes and Woes* And he lifted up his eyes to his disciples, and said,

"Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.
22 Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed shall you be when men hate you, and when they shut you out, and reproach you, and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and exult, for behold your reward is great in heaven. For in the selfsame manner their fathers used to treat the prophets.
24 "But woe to you rich! for you are now having your comfort.
25 Woe to you who are filled! for you shall hunger. Woe to

6, 13: The twelve are selected from among a larger crowd of disciples.

6, 17-49: See Mt 5—7 n.

6, 17-23: Used as the Gospel for seven Masses.

6, 17: *Level stretch*: a plateau on a flank of the mountain, according to some interpreters.

6, 20-23: For par see Mt 5, 3-12 n.

6, 20: The evangelist's use of "you" is more effective than that of "they" in Mt.

6, 22: *Shut you out*: ostracize you.

6, 24-26: The four woes interpret the preceding four beatitudes. The milieu of the woes apparently is no longer Galilee as in the primitive edition, nor is the background that of the kingdom inaugurated through our Lord's preaching. The milieu seems to be the early Church, as described in Acts, whose members came from the common people.

26 you who laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep. | Woe to you when all men speak well of you! In the selfsame manner their fathers used to treat the prophets.

27 *The Rules of Charity* "But I say to you who are listening:

28 Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those
29 who curse you, pray for those who calumniate you. And to him who strikes thee on the one cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away thy cloak, do not withhold
30 thy tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of thee, and from him who takes away thy goods, ask no return. And even as
31 you wish men to do to you, so also do you to them. And if you love those who love you, what merit have you? For
32 even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what merit have you? For even
33 sinners do that. | And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive in return, what merit have you? For even
34 sinners lend to sinners that they may get back as much in
35 return. But love your enemies; and do good, and lend, not hoping for any return, and your reward shall be great, and you shall be children of the Most High, for he is kind towards
36 the ungrateful and evil. Be merciful, therefore, even as your Father is merciful.

37 "Do not judge, and you shall not be judged; do not condemn, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and
38 you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they pour into your lap. For with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you."

39 *Self-examination* And he spoke a parable also to them, "Can a blind man guide a blind man? Will not both fall into
40 a pit? No disciple is above his teacher; but when perfected,
41 everyone will be like his teacher. But why dost thou see the speck in thy brother's eye, and yet dost not consider
42 the beam in thy own eye? And how canst thou say to thy brother, 'Brother, let me cast out the speck from thy eye,' while thou thyself dost not see the beam in thy own eye?"

6, 26: *The prophets*: in Greek, "the false prophets."

6, 27-36: See par Mt 5, 43-48.

6, 29: See Mt 5, 39 n.

6, 31: For par see Mt 7, 12 n.

6, 38b: See Mk 4, 24 n.

6, 39: The same saying is found in Mt 15, 14.

6, 40: See Mt 10, 24 n.

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thy own eye, and then thou wilt see clearly to cast out the speck from thy brother's eye.

43 "For there is no good tree that bears bad fruit, nor is
44 there a bad tree that bears good fruit. For every tree is
known by its fruit. For from thorns men do not gather
45 figs, neither from a bramble do they harvest grapes. The
good man from the good treasure of his heart brings forth
that which is good; and the evil man from the evil treasure
brings forth that which is evil. For out of the abundance
of the heart the mouth speaks.

46 *Conclusion of the Sermon* "But why do you call me,
47 'Lord, Lord,' and not practise the things that I say? Every-
one who comes to me and hears my words and acts upon
48 them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man
building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon
rock. And when a flood came, the stream broke against that
house and could not shake it; because it was founded on
49 rock. | But he who has heard my words and has not acted
upon them is like a man who built his house upon the
ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke
and straightway it fell in, and great was the wreck of that
house."

7

1 *The Centurion's Servant* When he had finished all his
discourse in the hearing of the people, he entered Capharnaum.
2 Now a servant of a certain centurion, to whom he was dear,
3 was sick to the point of death. And the centurion, hearing
of Jesus, sent to him elders of the Jews, beseeching him to
4 come and save his servant. And when they came to Jesus,
they entreated him earnestly, saying to him, "He is worthy
5 that thou shouldst do this for him, | for he loves our nation
and himself has built us our synagogue."

6, 43: The same saying is found in Mt 12, 33-35.

6, 44: See Mt 7, 16-18 for the same saying.

6, 46: See the same idea in Mt 7, 21.

6, 47-49: See par Mt 7, 24-27. Mt contrasts a wise man with a foolish man; Lk contrasts an energetic man with an idle man. Mt focuses on a durable site; Lk focuses on a solid foundation.

7, 1-10: For par see Mt 8, 5-13 n. The focal point of the story is apparently not the miracle but the faith of the pagan centurion.

- 6 So Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not trouble thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; this is why I did not think myself worthy to come to thee. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man subject to authority, and have soldiers subject to me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."
- 9 Now when Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "Amen I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." And when the messengers returned to the house, they found the servant in good health who had been ill.
- 11 *The Widow's Son* And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went to a town called Naim; and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. And as he drew near the gate of the town, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large gathering from the town was with her. And the Lord, seeing her, had compassion on her, and said to her, "Do not weep." And he went up and touched the stretcher; and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to thee, arise." And he who was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother.

7, 6: See Mt 8, 8 n.

7, 9: Lk highlights, more than Mt, that the faith of the pagan was greater than the faith of the Jews. See Mt 10, 5 n.

7, 11-17: The story, found only in this Gospel, is one of the three instances narrated in the Gospels of a resurrection from the dead by Jesus. The other two are those of the daughter of Jairus (8, 40-56) and of Lazarus (Jn 11, 1-44). Here in Lk's narrative there are several reminiscences of a similar event in the lives of Elias and Eliseus. Naim (v. 1) is only a few miles from Sunam, the place of Eliseus' raising of a young man (4 Kgs 4, 8-37). The words, "And he gave him to his mother" (v. 15) are identical with those that describe the raising to life of the son of the widow of Sarephtha by Elias (3 Kgs 17, 23).

7, 11: *Naim*: this hamlet is mentioned only here in the whole Bible. It lies a few miles southeast of Nazareth.

7, 12: The burial took place customarily in the evening of the day of death.

7, 13: *The Lord*: in the Gospels this title for Jesus is characteristic of Lk. Ordinarily it is ascribed to God the Father.

7, 15: See 7, 11-17 n.

16 But fear seized upon all and they began to glorify God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," and "God
17 has visited his people." And this report concerning him went forth throughout the whole of Judea, and all the country roundabout.

18 *The Baptist's Deputation* And John's disciples brought
19 him word of all these things. And John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord, saying, "Art thou he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

20 And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to thee, saying, 'Art thou he who
21 is to come, or shall we look for another?'" In that very hour he cured many of diseases, afflictions and evil spirits,
22 and to many who were blind he granted sight. And he answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have heard and seen; | the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the
23 poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not scandalized in me."

24 *Christ's Witness Concerning John* Then, as the messengers of John left, he began to say to the crowds concerning John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed
25 shaken by the wind? | But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear fine clothes
26 and live in luxury are in the houses of kings. | But what did
27 you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. | This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall make ready thy way before thee.'

7, 16: Many interpreters believe this to be in keeping with Lk's presentation of Jesus as a prophet (7, 39; 24, 19); and to mean perhaps that the Old Testament prophecy (see Dt 18, 15-20 n) has been fulfilled.

7, 18-28: See par Mt 11, 2-15.

7, 19: *He who is to come*: see Mt 11, 3 n.

7, 22-23: See Mt 11, 4-5 n.

7, 22: *The dead rise*: the evangelist most probably placed the narrative of the resurrection of the widow's son in the preceding episode in order to have Jesus tell the Baptist's followers: "the dead rise."

7, 23: See Mt 11, 6 n on the Baptist's idea about Jesus.

7, 25-27: See Mt 11, 7-9 n.

7, 27: See Mt 11, 10 n.

28 "I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29 And when they had heard him, all the people and the publicans justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers, not having been baptized by him, brought to naught God's purpose concerning themselves.

31 *The Stubborn Children* "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation? And what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market place, calling to one another and saying, 'We have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have sung dirges, and you have not wept.'

33 "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a devil.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold a man who is a glutton, and a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners!' And wisdom is justified by all her children."

36 *The Penitent Woman* Now one of the Pharisees asked him to dine with him; so he went into the house of the Pharisee and reclined at table. And behold, a woman in the town who was a sinner, upon learning that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of oint-

7, 28: See Mt 11, 11 n.

7, 29-30: These verses break the logical thread of the narrative.

7, 29: *Justified*: they recognized that their baptism by John was God's will.

7, 30: *The lawyers*: experts on the Law. This word is peculiar to Lk. The other evangelists say: scribe.

7, 33-34: Both John and Jesus were rejected by the majority of their countrymen.

7, 36-50: This episode is found only in Lk's Gospel. The evangelist probably placed it here on account of the accusation narrated in v. 34 that Jesus "is a glutton . . . a friend of sinners." Moreover, it is generally assumed that Lk omitted the narrative of the anointing at Bethany because it resembles too closely the episode described in these verses. (See Mt 26, 6-13 n.)

7, 36: *Reclined at table*: on a low couch by leaning toward the table.

7, 37: *A woman in the town who was a sinner*: a prostitute, according to commentators in general. The "woman" here is not Mary Magdalene. The Roman liturgy does not mean to pronounce itself on this problem when it uses vv. 36-49 in the Mass of Mary Magdalene (July 22). The oriental liturgies distinguish three women (see Mk 14, 3 n.).

- 38 ment; and standing behind him at his feet, she began to bathe his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.
- 39 Now when the Pharisee, who had invited him, saw it, he said to himself, "This man, were he a prophet, would surely know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."
- 40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have
41 something to say to thee." And he said, "Master, speak." | "A certain money-lender had two debtors; the one owed five
42 hundred denarii, the other fifty. As they had no means of paying, he forgave them both. Which of them, therefore,
43 will love him more?" | Simon answered and said, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him,
44 "Thou hast judged rightly." | And turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Dost thou see this woman? I came into thy house; thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she has bathed my feet with tears, and has wiped them with
45 her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, from the mo-
46 ment she entered, has not ceased to kiss my feet. Thou didst not anoint my head with oil; but she has anointed my
47 feet with ointment. Wherefore I say to thee, her sins, many as they are, shall be forgiven her, because she has loved

7, 38: It was acceptable in Palestine for the uninvited, including beggars, to mingle with the guests at a private dinner. *Behind him at his feet*: according to custom, Jesus had left his sandals at the door. *Tears*: of sorrow. *Kissed his feet*: this gesture was an accepted sign of deep humiliation. *Wiped them with the hair of her head*: it was impolite for women to let their hair down in public. The woman comes to express her sorrow to Jesus for her life of sin and to ask for forgiveness.

7, 39: It is possible that, as the woman attended to his feet, Jesus noticed the unconscious look of disapproval on the face of his host.

7, 41: *Denarii*: a denarius equaled a day's wage for a laborer.

7, 43: The parable (vv. 41f) means that the amount of gratitude or love should correspond to the amount of pardon received.

7, 44-46: In contrasting the indifference of Simon with the exuberant signs of love by which the woman expresses her sorrow for sin, our Lord answers Simon who doubts within himself that Jesus is a true prophet (v. 39). Jesus does not compare the woman and Simon to the two debtors, and himself to the money-lender of the parable.

7, 45-46: It is not clear whether the Pharisee who neglected these signs of hospitality was a friend of Jesus, or a Pharisee who was curious about Jesus and entertained him, albeit as a social inferior.

7, 45: *She entered*: in Greek, "I entered." *Kiss*: of welcome.

7, 47: *Shall be forgiven her*: a more exact translation is, "have been forgiven her." Jesus forgives the woman her sins because she

46 much. But he to whom little is forgiven, loves little." And
 49 he said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." And they who were
 at table with him began to say within themselves, "Who is
 50 this man, who even forgives sins?" But he said to the
 woman, "Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace."

8

¹ *The Ministering Women* And it came to pass afterwards, that he was journeying through towns and villages, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. And

loves much, as the incident shows (v. 38). The Greek word favors the more usual translation "because" (as in the present CCD edition) she loved much. (See the alternate translation "since" in the rival opinion explained below.) The love of the sinful woman is the cause of the pardon of her sins. This is the well-known Catholic teaching that perfect contrition wipes away sins. The removal of sin by love is the immediate sense of the text. But Catholic interpreters presuppose here the common teaching that even the first impulse of love, and of sorrow for sin, comes ultimately from God himself. The reason why from the very beginning of the narrative the woman is assumed to be a penitent woman is that v. 47 was interpreted as: "her sins are forgiven (or: have been forgiven) because she has loved much." The explanation given above may be called: the penitent woman interpretation, which is the more common opinion among Catholics. A less common opinion among Catholics may be entitled: the grateful woman interpretation. According to this latter interpretation, the unnamed woman comes to express gratitude to Jesus for already having been forgiven by God for a life of sin. Her tears (v. 38) are from joy (not from sorrow). The crucial v. 47 is therefore in this opinion translated as: "her sins . . . are forgiven (or: have been forgiven) since she has loved much," as the incident shows (v. 38). Her love and gratitude are the effect (not the cause) or the sign of her previous pardon for sins. Consequently, according to this interpretation, v. 47 may be understood as an application of Christ's parable (vv. 41f). The parable illustrates that the debtor who owed more showed his love *after* his forgiveness. Hence, God had already forgiven the woman's sins and afterward she expressed her love to him through Jesus. The harmonious accord between the parable and this interpretation of v. 47 justifies this assumption: the woman from the beginning of the narrative is a grateful (not a penitent) woman. The rest of v. 47, "But he to whom little is forgiven, loves little," may also be understood as an application of the parable. Just as the parable clarifies that the debtor who was forgiven more also loved more, so the opposite is true that the debtor who was forgiven less also loved less. Lastly, in v. 48 ("Your sins are forgiven") Jesus does not absolve the woman but reassures and encourages her.

7, 50: *Go in peace*: the words of farewell to Anna by Heli, the priest (1 Sm 1, 17).

8, 1: Jesus preached everywhere as he promised (4, 43).

2 with him were the Twelve, | and certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, who is called
3 the Magdalene, from whom seven devils had gone out, | and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who used to provide for them out of their means.

4 *Parable of the Sower* Now when a very great crowd was gathering together and men from every town were
5 resorting to him, he said in a parable: "The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the
6 air ate it up. And other seed fell upon the rock, and as soon as it had sprung up it withered away, because it had no
7 moisture. And other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns
8 sprang up with it and choked it. And other seed fell upon good ground, and sprang up and yielded fruit a hundred-fold." As he said these things he cried out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

9 But his disciples then began to ask him what this parable meant. | He said to them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.
12 And those by the wayside are they who have heard; then

8, 2: We learn here for the first time that there were women among the disciples of Jesus. The idea of female disciples was revolutionary because the Jews did not consider women capable of comprehending the same religious instructions that men received. Although the moral and spiritual elevation of women by our Lord was paralleled with the same idea among contemporary Stoic philosophers, Christ's influence was more effective. *Mary . . . Magdalene*: since Lk gives her name here it seems evident to many commentators that she was not the penitent woman of the preceding narrative (7, 36-50). *Magdalene*: the name comes from Magdala, a town on the western coast of Lake Genesareth. *Seven devils*: seven means many as in 11, 26.

8, 3: We learn for the first time that these women financed, at least partially, the expenses of Jesus and of his disciples. *Joanna*: she is mentioned only once more, namely among the women at the grave (Lk 24, 10). *Herod*: Antipas, the Herod of the Passion. *Susanna*: otherwise unknown.

8, 4-15: See par Mt 13, 1-23.

8, 5-8: See Mt 13, 3-9 n.

8, 5: *Parable*: see its definition in Mt 13, 3 n.

8, 8: *A hundredfold*: see Mt 13, 8 n.

8, 9-10: See Mt 13, 10-15 n.

8, 11-15: See Mt 13, 18-23 n.

the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart,
 13 that they may not believe and be saved. Now those upon
 the rock are they who, when they have heard, receive the
 word with joy; and these have no root, but believe for a
 14 while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which
 fell among the thorns, these are they who have heard, and
 as they go their way are choked by the cares and riches
 and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not ripen.
 15 But that upon good ground, these are they who, with a
 right and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast,
 and bear fruit in patience.

16 *Purpose of This Teaching* "Now no one, when he has
 lighted a lamp, covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a
 couch, but he puts it upon a lamp-stand, that they who
 17 enter may see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will
 not be made manifest; nor anything concealed that will not be
 18 known and come to light. Take heed, therefore, how you
 hear; for to him who has shall be given; and from him
 who does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be
 taken away."

19 *Jesus and His Brethren* Now his mother and brethren
 came to him; and they could not get to him because of the
 20 crowd. And it was told him, "Thy mother and thy brethren
 21 are standing outside, wishing to see thee." But he answered
 and said to them, "My mother and my brethren are they
 who hear the word of God, and act upon it."

22 *The Storm on the Lake* Now it came to pass on one of
 those days, that he and his disciples got into a boat, and
 he said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the
 23 lake." And they put out to sea. But as they were sailing,
 he fell asleep. And a squall swept down upon the lake,

8, 16-18: For par see Mk 4, 21-25 n.

8, 19-21: For par see Mt 12, 46-50 n.

8, 19: *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers." See Mt 13, 55-56 n.

8, 21: *Who hear the word of God*: the evangelist most probably
 takes this episode from par Mk 3, 31-35, but adjusts Mk's last verse
 ("whoever does the will of God") to refer, like the preceding
 parable of the sower, to those who "having the word, hold it fast"
 (Lk 8, 15).

8, 22-25: For par see Mt 8, 23-27 n.

8, 22: *One of those days*: according to par Mk 4, 35f, the storm
 took place on the evening of the day Christ preached in parables.

8, 23: *A squall*: see Mt 8, 24 n.

24 and they were filling and were in peril. So they can and woke him, saying, "Master, we are perishing." Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased, and there came a calm. | And he said to them, "Where is your faith?" But they were afraid, and marvelled, saying to one another, "Who, then, is this, that he commands even the winds and the sea, and they obey him?"

26 *Expulsion of the Devils in Gerasa* And they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. Now when he landed, there met him a certain man who for a long time was possessed by a devil, and wore no clothes, and lived in the tombs, not in a house. And when he saw Jesus, he fell down before him, and crying out with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I pray thee, do not torment me." For he was charging the unclean spirit to go forth from the man. For many times it had laid hold of him; and he was bound with chains and fetters, and kept under guard, but he would break the bonds asunder, and be driven by the devil into the desert. 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Legion," because many devils had entered into him. And they entreated him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a herd of many swine was there, feeding on the mountain-side. And they kept entreating him to give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave. | And the devils came out from the man and entered into the swine; and the herd rushed down the cliff into the lake and were drowned. 34 And when the swineherds saw what had happened, the

8, 25: *Faith*: see Mk 4, 40 n. They were afraid and marvelled the evangelist combines the apostles' fear (Mk 4, 40) with their wonderment (see Mt 8, 27 n).

8, 26-29: See par Mt 8, 28-34.

8, 26: *Gerasenes . . . opposite Galilee*: see Mt 8, 28 n.

8, 28: Mainly because of Gentile territory, the demoniac is generally considered a pagan by biblicists.

8, 30: *Because many devils had entered into him*: par Mk 5, 9 "for we are many" is thereby clarified a little.

8, 31: *Abyss*: a favorite term in the Book of Apocalypse for the abode of the devils.

8, 32-34: See Mt 8, 32 n.

8, 32-33: See Mk 5, 12 n.

35 fled and reported it in the town and in the country; and people came out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the devils had gone out sitting at his feet, clothed and in his right mind; 36 and they were afraid. And those also who had seen it reported to them how he had been saved from Legion. And 37 all the people of the Gerasene district besought him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear. 38 And he got into a boat and went back. | But the man from whom the devils had gone out prayed him that he might remain with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, | "Return to thy house, and tell all that God has done for thee." And he departed, publishing throughout the whole town all that Jesus had done for him.

40 *The Daughter of Jairus; the Woman with a Hemorrhage*
Now it came to pass when Jesus had returned, that the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41 And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at the feet of Jesus, he 42 entreated him to come to his house, | for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

And it happened as he went that he was pressed upon 43 by the crowds. | And a certain woman who for twelve years had had a hemorrhage, and had spent all her means on 44 physicians, but could not be cured by anyone, | came up behind him and touched the tassel of his cloak; and at once her hemorrhage ceased.

45 And Jesus said, "Who touched me?" But as all were denying it, Peter, and those who were with him, said,

8, 35-37: See Mk 5, 15-17 on the departure of Jesus.

8, 37: Lk adds to Mt's and Mk's accounts the reason why the people requested Jesus to depart.

8, 38: *Jesus sent him away*: our Lord never lowered his dignity to the extent of being accompanied by a "sample" of his miracles.

8, 39: Jesus, contrary to his frequent command of secrecy, probably tells the man to spread the news of his cure because the Gentiles would not see in this cure the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation of a political Messiah. *God*: the Christian readers of the evangelist understood the identity between God and Jesus.

8, 40-56: For par see Mt 9, 18-26 n.

8, 42: *She was dying*: see Mk 5, 23 n.

8, 43: *Woman . . . twelve years . . . hemorrhage*: see Mt 9, 20 n. Lk, understandably sympathetic to his physician colleagues, softens par Mk 5, 26.

8, 45: The evangelist has Peter, in contrast to par Mk 5, 31 say, "his disciples said."

"Master, the crowds throng and press upon thee, and dost
 46 thou say, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone
 touched me; for I perceived that power had gone forth from
 47 me." But the woman, seeing that she had not escaped notice,
 came up trembling, and falling down at his feet, declared in
 the presence of all the people why she had touched him,
 48 and how she had been healed instantly. And he said to
 her, "Daughter, thy faith has saved thee; go in peace."
 49 While he was yet speaking, there came one from the
 house of the ruler of the synagogue, saying to him, "Thy
 50 daughter is dead; do not trouble him." But Jesus on
 hearing this word answered the father of the girl, "Do not
 be afraid; only have faith and she shall be saved."
 51 And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to
 enter with him, except Peter and James and John, and the
 52 girl's father and mother. And all were weeping and mourn-
 ing for her. But he said, "Do not weep; she is asleep, not
 53 dead." And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she
 54 was dead. But he, taking her by the hand, cried out, saying,
 55 "Girl, arise!" | And her spirit returned, and she rose up
 immediately. And he directed that something be given her
 56 to eat. And her parents were amazed, but he charged them
 to tell no one what had happened.

9

1 *The Mission of the Apostles* Then having summoned the
 twelve apostles, he gave them power and authority over
 2 all the devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them forth
 to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick
 3 And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither
 staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two
 4 tunics. And whatever house you enter, stay there, and do
 5 not leave the place. And whoever does not receive you—
 go forth from that town, and shake off even the dust from
 6 your feet for a witness against them." And going forth

8, 48: Christ's delicate thoughtfulness is revealed in not allowing that the woman remain unnoticed. Had Jesus allowed it, she would never have received his assurance that she was cured because of faith in him, and not because of magic.

8, 53: See Mk 5, 40 n on the "sleeping theory."

9, 1-6: For par see Mt 10, 9-14 n.

9, 4: *Do not leave the place*: in Greek, "do not depart from there." See Mt 10, 11 n.

9, 5: See Acts 13, 51 n about this custom.

they went about from village to village, preaching the gospel and working cures everywhere.

- 7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was being done by him, and was much perplexed, because it was said
8 | by some, "John has risen from the dead"; and by some, "Elias has appeared"; and by others, "One of the prophets
9 of old has risen again." But Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he endeavored to see him.
- 10 And the apostles on their return reported to him all that they had done. And taking them with him, he withdrew apart to a desert place, which belongs to Bethsaida.
- 11 | But the crowds on learning it followed him. And he welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and those in need of cure he healed.

- 12 ***Jesus Feeds Five Thousand*** Now the day began to decline; and the Twelve came up and said to him, "Send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and farms roundabout and find lodging and provisions, for we are in a
13 desert place here." But he said to them, "You yourselves give them some food." And they said, "We have not more than five loaves and two fishes, unless we are to go and buy
14 food for all this crowd." For there were about five thousand men present.

- Then he said to his disciples, "Make them recline in
15 groups of fifties." | And they did so, and made them all
16 recline. And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, blessed them and broke the loaves,
17 and gave them to his disciples to set before the crowds. And all ate and were satisfied; and what was left over to them was gathered up, twelve baskets of fragments.

9, 7-9: For par see Mt 14, 1-2 n. This interlude fills in the gap between the sending out of the apostles and their return.

9, 8: *Elias has appeared*: Elias was thought to return as the precursor of the Messia (Mal 3, 23).

9, 9: In contrast with the superstition attributed to Herod (see Mt 14, 1-2 n), Lk's account shows that Herod knew Jesus was not the Baptist. *And he endeavored to see him*: with hostile intent (as in 13, 31), or curious intent (as in 23, 8)?

9, 10-17: For the number of miracles see par Mt 14, 13-21 n and Mk 8, 1-9 n.

4

18 *Peter's Confession; Passion and Resurrection Foretold*

And it came to pass as he was praying in private, that his disciples also were with him, and he asked them, saying

19 "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered and said, "John the Baptist; and others, Elias; and others that one of the ancient prophets has risen again."

20 And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

21 Simon Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." | But he strictly charged them, and commanded them not to tell this to anyone, | saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be put to death, and on the third day rise again."

23 ***The Doctrine of the Cross*** And he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but ruin or lose himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and that of the Father and of the holy angels. But I say to you truly, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God."

9, 18-22: See par Mt 16, 13-20.

9, 18-21: See Mt 16, 13-17 n.

9, 18: *He was praying*: small wonder indeed that Lk's first volume is called the "gospel of prayer." *Who do the crowds say I am?*: this is one of the most eloquent Gospel recordings showing the clear consciousness that Jesus had of being the Messiah.

9, 19: The disciples repeat the rumors stated in v. 8.

9, 22: The first prediction of the Passion in Lk. For par s Mk 8, 31-33 n. *On the third day rise again*: see Mk 8, 31 n.

9, 23-27: This passage appears like a group of separate sayings linked together in a chain. See par Mt 16, 24-28.

9, 23: *To all*: the evangelist's addition of this phrase may indicate more clearly that the following exhortations are for all peoples of all times. Lk adds "daily" to Mt's and Mk's "take up his cross," perhaps to underscore a constant state of preparedness. See Mk 8, 34 n.

9, 24-26: See Mt 16, 25-27 n.

9, 24: See Mt 16, 25 n on the spiritual meaning of this verse.

9, 26: *Son of Man . . . comes . . . angels*: see Mt 16, 27 n.

9, 27: See Mt 16, 28 n.

²⁸ **Jesus Transfigured** Now it came to pass about eight days after these words, that he took Peter, James and John and
²⁹ went up the mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the appearance of his countenance was changed, and his raiment
³⁰ became a radiant white. And behold, two men were talking
³¹ with him. And these were Moses and Elias, | who, appearing in glory, spoke of his death, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem.

³² Now Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep. But when they were fully awake, they saw his glory and
³³ the two men who were standing with him. And it came to pass as they were parting from him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. And let us set up three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and
³⁴ one for Elias," not knowing what he said. But as he was speaking thus, there came a cloud and overshadowed them;
³⁵ and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved
³⁶ Son; hear him." And after the voice had passed, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one at that time any of these things that they had seen.

³⁷ **A Possessed Boy** Now it came to pass on the following day, when they came down from the mountain, that a large
³⁸ crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, "Master, I pray thee to look at my son, for he

9, 28-36: For par see Mt 17, 1-8 n.

9, 28: Lk prefers the round number of "eight days" to the more precise six days of par Mt 17, 1 and Mk 9, 1.

9, 31: In this verse, at least, Lk seems to make it apparent that the events of the transfiguration were meant to prepare the apostles to accept the humiliation of the Passion of Jesus.

9, 32: *Heavy with sleep*: the more common opinion is that the transfiguration is described as having occurred at night.

9, 33: *Three tents, one for thee . . . Moses . . . Elias*: a common interpretation is that Peter wanted to prolong this happy event; a possible interpretation is that Peter thought this was the end of the world when God would come to live with men. Whatever the correct interpretation may be, this sanguine request is true to Peter's character and a telling argument against a symbolic interpretation of the transfiguration.

9, 35: *My beloved Son*: most textual critics believe the original reading is "my chosen Son," a reference to the suffering servant of Is 42, 1.

9, 37-43: For par see Mt 17, 14-20 n.

9, 38: It is typical of Lk to add the detail of an "only child," not found in the other two parallel Gospel accounts. Lk mentions this detail in 7, 12 and 8, 42.

39 is my only child; | and behold, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out; and it throws him down and convulses him so that he foams, and bruising him sorely, it scarcely
40 leaves him. And I prayed thy disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

41 But Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and put up
42 with you? Bring thy son here to me." And as he was yet coming near, the devil cast him down and threw him into
43 convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed
44 the boy, and restored him to his father. And all were astounded at the majesty of God.

The Second Prediction of the Passion But while all marvelled at all the things that he was doing, he said to his disciples, "Store up these words in your minds: the Son of
45 Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men." | But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them, that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

46 *Against Ambition and Envy* Now a discussion arose
47 among them, which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their heart, took a little child and
48 set him at his side, | and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child for my sake, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. For he who is the least among you, he is the greatest."

49 But John answered and said, "Master, we saw a man

9, 39: See Mt 17, 14 n.

9, 40: *And I prayed thy disciples to cast it out, but they could not*: perhaps no one has contrasted so well the transfiguration scene with that of the possessed boy as A. Plummer, "the chosen three blinded by the light, the remaining nine baffled by the powers of darkness."

9, 41: See Mt 17, 16 n.

9, 43: See Mt 17, 17 n.

9, 44-45: The evangelist perhaps wants to forecast the apostles' misunderstanding of the forthcoming Passion by purposely situating this prediction of Christ's death between his successful Galilean ministry (the preceding cure of the possessed boy), and the failure of the apostles to comprehend him and his mission (the dispute about greatness following in vv. 46-48).

9, 46-48: For par see Mt 18, 1-4 n.

9, 48: See Mk 9, 35-36 n.

9, 49-50: For the narrative of the strange exorcist, see par Mk 9, 37-40 n.

casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because
 50 he does not follow with us." And Jesus said to him, "Do
 not forbid him; for he who is not against you is for you."

5

51 *The Unfriendly Samaritans* Now it came to pass, when
 the days had come for him to be taken up, that he stead-
 52 fastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, | and sent messengers
 before him. And they went and entered a Samaritan town to
 53 make ready for him; | and they did not receive him, be-
 54 cause his face was set for Jerusalem. But when his disciples
 James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that
 we bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?"
 55 But he turned and rebuked them, saying, "You do not
 56 know of what manner of spirit you are; | for the Son of
 Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."
 And they went to another village.

57 *Sacrifice to Follow Christ* And it came to pass as they
 went on their journey, that a man said to him, "I will
 58 follow thee wherever thou goest." And Jesus said to him,
 "The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests,
 but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."
 59 And he said to another, "Follow me." But he said
 60 "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." | But Jesus
 said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but do thou
 61 go and proclaim the kingdom of God." And another said,
 "I will follow thee, Lord; but let me first bid farewell
 62 to those at home." | Jesus said to him, "No one, having put

9, 51-56: This passage is found only in Lk's Gospel.

9, 51: After the Galilean ministry there follows the trip of Jesus to Jerusalem to confront the Jewish leaders and ultimately to be crucified. This travelogue ends with 19, 48. See "sources" in the Introduction to this Gospel. *Taken up*: to heaven after his passion, death, and resurrection.

9, 53: The Samaritans had their own temple on Mount Garizim. They were hostile to anyone who went to the temple of Jerusalem to worship.

9, 54: This is the way Elias acted (4 Kgs 1, 10-12).

9, 55-56: *Saying, "You do not know . . . to save them"*: not included in the original text.

9, 57-60: See par Mt 8, 19-22.

9, 57: This may be an allusion to the Jerusalem journey.

9, 61-62: This passage is strikingly similar to the call of Eliseus by Elias (3 Kgs 19, 20).

his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

10

1 The Seventy-two Disciples Now after this the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and sent them forth two by two before him into every town and place where he himself was about to come. And he said to them, "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest.

"Go. Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry neither purse, nor wallet, nor sandals, and greet no one on the way. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if a son of peace be there, your peace will rest upon him; but if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they have; for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. And whatever town you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you, | and cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' But whatever town you enter, and they do not receive you—go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust from your town that cleaves to us we shake off against you; yet know this, that the kingdom of God is at hand.' I say to you, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that town.

13 The Impenitent Towns "Woe to thee, Corozain! woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been worked the miracles that have been worked in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted to heaven? Thou shalt be thrust down to hell.

"He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me."

10, 1-9: Used as the Gospel of nine Masses.

10, 2: *Lord*: owner. For par see Mt 9, 37-38 n. *Into his harvest*: to reap it.

10, 3: For par see Mt 10, 16 n.

10, 4-11: See Lk 9, 3-5.

10, 4: *Nor sandals*: for par see Mk 6, 9 n.

10, 6: *A son of peace*: Hebraic idiom for a peaceful man.

10, 13-15: See par Mt 11, 21-24.

17 *Return of the Disciples* Now the seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name." But he said to them, "I was watching Satan fall as lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the might of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. But do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; rejoice rather in this, that your names are written in heaven."

21 *Jesus Draws Men Gently to Himself* In that very hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them to little ones. Yes, Father, for such was thy good pleasure. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and him to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

23 And turning to his disciples he said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I say to you, many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and they have

10, 17-20: Only Lk narrates this event.

10, 17: It is most likely that the seventy-two did not return on the same day they were sent. *Name*: neither Jesus nor his disciples used his name like a magical formula to expel devils, but some degree and type of faith was required from the beneficiary.

10, 18: Because the disciples reported their expulsion of the devils and because of his previous similar activity, Jesus can now figuratively and meditatively declare that he has seen the beginning of the fall of Satan, which is the meaning of "fall as lightning from heaven." Hence, the expression does not refer to the past fall of Lucifer from heaven nor to his angelic brilliance, nor to a vision experienced by Jesus, although this figure of speech originates from the Babylonian king's descent to sheol (Is 14, 13).

10, 19: *Serpents and scorpions*: these are examples of powers hostile to God and man (see Ps 90, 13). In other words, Satan is depicted as the cause of all evil (13, 16). It is disputed whether Jesus literally or metaphorically gives his disciples power over these animals, but there is a trend in favor of the latter opinion.

10, 20: *Your names are written in heaven*: rejoice rather that you have been chosen for eternal life. The metaphor of the book is frequent in the Old Testament. See Dn 12, 1 n.

10, 21-22: For par see Mt 11, 25-27 n.

10, 22: See Mt 11, 27 n.

10, 23-24: See par Mt 13, 16-17. The implication is: unfortunately this was not the interpretation of Christ's ministry by the people at large (that his wonders and words fulfilled the Messianic hopes), but an interpretation shared only by his disciples.

10, 23: *He said*: in Greek, "he said privately."

not seen it; and to hear what you hear, and they have not heard it."

25 *The Great Commandment: The Good Samaritan* And behold, a certain lawyer got up to test him, saying, "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?" But he said to him 26 "What is written in the Law? How dost thou read?" He answered and said,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

28 And he said to him, "Thou hast answered rightly; do this and thou shalt live." But he, wishing to justify himself said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Jesus answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell in with robbers, who after both stripping him and beating him went their way, leaving him half-dead. But, as it happened, a certain priest was going down the same way; and when he saw him, he passed by. And likewise a Levite also, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came upon him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And he went up to him and bound up his wound pouring on oil and wine. And setting him on his own beast

10, 25-28: See par Mt 22, 34-40. Since the parallel passages of Mt and Mk have Jesus recite this synthesis from the Old Testament and Lk has a lawyer recite it, some scholars see therein an indication that the first Christians did not consider these ideas original with Jesus but a genuine echo from the Old Testament.

10, 27: See Dt 6, 5 n. *Thy neighbor as thyself*; see Lv 19, 18.

10, 28: Luke may be referring to Lv 18, 5: "Do this and you will live."

10, 29-37: The narrative of the lawyer's question and Christ's answer form a unified account in Mt and Mk, but Lk subordinates it to the parable which is presented as an answer to the lawyer's further question, "Who is my neighbor?"

10, 29: *Who is my neighbor?*: the typical frame of mind behind such a question for a man at that time most likely was: How much charity am I expected to show other Jews in my community?

10, 30: *Down from Jerusalem to Jericho*: this is even today a lonely route. On it lies, incidentally, "the Samaritan's Inn."

10, 31-32: *Priest . . . Levite*: one impressive indication that the parable originated from Palestine is: pagan priests were not expected to live according to a high moral and religious standard.

10, 33: *Samaritan*: the Samaritans, living in neighboring Samaria, were traditionally bitter enemies of the Jews because of their apostasy. See the end of "Religious Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament.

35 he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him; and whatever more thou spendest, I, on my way back, will repay thee."

36 "Which of these three, in thy opinion, proved himself
37 neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" And he said, "He who took pity on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do thou also in like manner."

38 *Martha and Mary* Now it came to pass as they were on their journey, that he entered a certain village; and a woman
39 named Martha welcomed him to her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also seated herself at the Lord's feet,
40 and listened to his word. But Martha was busy about much serving. And she came up and said, "Lord, is it no concern of thine that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her therefore to help me."

41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha,
42 thou art anxious and troubled about many things; | and yet only one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the best part, and it will not be taken away from her."

10, 35: *Two denarii*: two days' wages for a laborer. The parable does not intend to teach that the Samaritans were usually kind and priests and Levites were usually unkind.

10, 36: *These three*: the audience of Jesus most likely expected that a layman be mentioned after the priest and Levite. Yet, our Lord purposely included a Samaritan, who was so bitterly hated as a half-breed (racially and religiously), to show the boundless extent of Christian love.

10, 37: Jesus changes the question of the lawyer from the object of love, "Who is my neighbor?" (v. 29) to the subject of love ("Which . . . proved himself neighbor?"). The answer is: by showing charity to anyone in need, especially to him who is in greatest need. *He who took pity on him*: since the Jewish lawyer does not reply explicitly "the Samaritan," this may be an indication of the bitter hatred between Samaritans and Jews.

10, 38-42: The story is peculiar to Lk.

10, 38: The verse may be an allusion to their journey to Jerusalem. *A certain village*: Bethany, near Jerusalem, according to Jn 11, 1.

10, 42: *One thing is needful . . . best part*: owing to the different readings of important Greek manuscripts, there are equally probable translations of these two phrases. *One thing is needful*: other Greek manuscripts read "a few things are necessary." One opinion, the so-called "one dish interpretation" is usually rejected by scholars. *Best part*: other Greek manuscripts read, "good," "better," or "best." The general meaning may be that salvation is the most necessary thing. The specific meaning may be: Christ's word, or devotion to Christ, is the most necessary thing. A popular, not scriptural, allegory interprets Martha as a symbol of the active life, and Mary as symbolizing the contemplative life.

11

1 Lessons on Prayer And it came to pass as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come! | Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

5 And he said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him in the middle of the night and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, | for a friend of mine has just come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; | and he from within should answer and say, 'Do not disturb me; the door is now shut, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give to thee?'"

8 "I say to you, although he will not get up and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him all he needs. And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it shall be opened. But if one of you asks his father for a loaf, will he hand him a stone? or for a fish, will he for a fish hand him a serpent? | or if he asks for an egg, will he hand him a scorpion? Therefore, if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Good Spirit to those who ask him!"

14 Blasphemy of the Pharisees And he was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb; and when he had cast out

11, 2-4: For par see Mt 6, 9-13 n.

11, 5-8: The parable of the friend at midnight is peculiar to Lk. It is graphic and slightly humorous. The moral is: if you grant a friend a request because of his persistence, how much more will God grant you your request freely? This lesson of encouragement to confidently petition God in prayer serves as an introduction to the sayings in vv. 9-13.

11, 9-13: For this simile of the father and the child, see par Mt 7, 7-11.

11, 11: See Mt 7, 10 n.

11, 12: The example of the egg and the scorpion is not found in par Mt.

11, 13: *Good Spirit*: the Holy Spirit. Jesus rarely speaks of the Holy Spirit in the first three Gospels. See Mt 7, 7 n.

11, 14-23: See par Mt 12, 22-30.

11, 14: See Mt 12, 22 n.

the devil, the dumb man spoke. And the crowds marvelled.

¹⁵ But some of them said, "By Beelzebub, the prince of devils, ¹⁶ he casts out devils." And others, to test him, demanded from him a sign from heaven.

¹⁷ But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and house ¹⁸ will fall upon house. If, then, Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that I ¹⁹ cast out devils by Beelzebub. | Now, if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? There- ²⁰ fore they shall be your judges. | But if I cast out devils by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon ²¹ you. When the strong man, fully armed, guards his court- ²² yard, his property is undisturbed. But if a stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he will take away all his weapons ²³ that he relied upon, and will divide his spoils. He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me scatters.

²⁴ "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he roams through waterless places in search of rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house which I left.' ²⁵ And when he has come to it, he finds the place swept. ²⁶ Then he goes and takes seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."

²⁷ *The Praise of Mary* Now it came to pass as he was saying these things, that a certain woman from the crowd lifted

11, 15: *Beelzebub*: see Mt 12, 24 n.

11, 17: *And house will fall upon house*: and a house divided against itself perishes.

11, 19: *Children*: people. See Mt 12, 27 n.

11, 20: *Kingdom of God has come*: see Mt 12, 28 n.

11, 23: This saying has the same meaning as explained in Mt 12, 30 n.

11, 24-26: For par see Mt 12, 43-45.

11, 24: *He*: refers to the unclean spirit from v. 24 through v. 26.

11, 26: *Seven other spirits*: "seven" most probably means "many." See another example in 8, 2 n.

11, 27-28: From the woman's viewpoint, the underlying sentiment characteristic of an Oriental is that feminine honor and joy are derived from a son who has become a success in life. From the viewpoint of Jesus, an honorific title of his person, devoid of all religious significance, is meaningless. Moreover, Jesus publicly, although implicitly, honors his mother by asserting the principle whereby she is even more praiseworthy than the anonymous woman assumed Mary to be, namely: by her pre-eminent keeping of the word of God. Both this

up her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breasts that nursed thee." But he said "Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."

29 *The Sign of Jonas* And as the crowds were gathering together, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation: it demands a sign, and no sign shall be given it but the sign of Jonas. For even as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so will also the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

33 *A Lesson from a Lamp* "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a cellar or even under the measure, but upon the lamp stand, that they who enter in may see the light. The lamp of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be sound, thy whole body will be full of light. But if it be evil, thy body also will be full of darkness. Take care, therefore, that the light that is in thee is not darkness. If, then, thy whole body is full of light, having no part in darkness, it will all be illumined, as when a bright lamp illumines thee."

37 *Denunciation of the Pharisees* Now after he had spoken a Pharisee asked him to dine with him. And he went in and reclined at table. But the Pharisee began to ponder and ask himself why he had not washed before dinner.

incident and 8, 19-21 highlight the superiority of spiritual relationship with God's word or kingdom over a purely human relationship with Christ himself.

11, 29-32: See par Mt 12, 38-42.

11, 30-32: See Mt 12, 41-42 n.

11, 30: *Son of Man*: see Mt 8, 20 n.

11, 33: The same saying is found in Lk 8, 16; Mt 5, 15; and Mk 4, 21. *The measure*: bushel basket.

11, 34-35: See par Mt 6, 22-23.

11, 34: *But if it (eye) be evil, thy body also will be full of darkness*: see Mt 6, 23 n.

11, 37-54: Jesus lists the reasons why the Pharisees were blind to the significance of his person and mission. Eight of the sayings are found in scattered parts of Mt ch. 23.

39 But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of robbery and wickedness. Foolish ones! did not he who made the outside make the inside too? Nevertheless, give that which remains as alms; and behold, all things are clean to you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! because you pay tithes on mint and rue and every herb, and disregard justice and the love of God. But these things you ought to have done, while not leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! because you love the front seats in the synagogues and greetings in the market place. Woe to you! because you are like hidden tombs, over which men walk unaware."

43 *Denunciation of the Lawyers* But one of the lawyers, answering, said to him, "Master, in saying these things, thou insultest us also." But he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! because you load men with oppressive burdens and you yourselves with one of your fingers do not touch the burdens. | Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets, whereas your fathers killed them. So then you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God has said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles; and some of them they will put to death and persecute, | that the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who was slain between the altar and the temple.' Yes, I say to you, it shall be required

11, 39: The Pharisees lavished much care on the ritual cleansing of dishes, but not on cleansing themselves of "robbery and wickedness."

11, 40: *He*: a reference to God.

11, 41: The Greek is obscure.

11, 42: See par Mt 23, 23.

11, 44: Just as men, unawares, walk over unmarked graves and become unclean (Nm 19, 16), so do men, associating with the corrupt, become corrupt unawares.

11, 47-48: Only the general sense is clear, namely: the lawyers partake in the guilt of their ancestors and prophets.

11, 48: *You are witnesses*: you verify.

11, 49-51: The meaning of these condensed verses are clearer in the expanded par Mt 23, 34-36.

11, 49: *The wisdom of God*: Jesus is interpreting God in his wisdom who said. . . .

11, 51: *Abel*: a reference to Gn 4, 8. *Zacharias*: a reference to 2 Par 24, 20-22.

- ⁵² of this generation. | Woe to you lawyers! because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you have not entered yourselves and those who were entering you have hindered.
- ⁵³ After he had said these things to them, the Pharisees and the lawyers began to press him hard and to provoke
- ⁵⁴ him to speak on many things, | setting traps for him and plotting to seize upon something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

12

- ¹ *The Leaven of the Pharisees* Now when immense crowd had gathered together, so that they were treading on one another, he began to say to his disciples, "Beware of the
- ² leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, and nothing
- ³ hidden that will not be made known. For what you have said in darkness will be said in the light; and what you have whispered in the inner chambers will be preached on the housetops.
- ⁴ *Encouragement in Persecution* "But I say to you, my friends: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and
- ⁵ after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall be afraid of; be afraid of him
- ⁶ who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell. Yes, I say to you, be afraid of him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And yet not one of them is forgotten before
- ⁷ God. Yes, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not be afraid, you are of more value than many sparrows.
- ⁸ "And I say to you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, him will the Son of Man also acknowledge
- ⁹ before the angels of God. But whoever disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.
- ¹⁰ And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

11, 53: *After he had said these things to them*: according to the better Greek manuscript, read: "And after he had departed from there."

12, 1-8: Used as the Gospel of seven Masses.

12, 2-9: See Mt 10, 25-39 n.

12, 10: For par see Mt 12, 32 n.

11 "And when they bring you before the synagogues and the magistrates and the authorities, do not be anxious how or wherewith you shall defend yourselves, or what you shall say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

13 *A Warning against Avarice* Now one out of the crowd said to him, "Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who has appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take heed and guard yourselves from all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

16 But he spoke a parable to them, saying, "The land of a certain rich man brought forth abundant crops. And he began to take thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, for I have no room to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store up all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee; and the things that thou hast provided, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich as regards God."

22 *Trust in God* But he said to his disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. The life is a greater thing than the food, and the body than the

12, 11-12: See par Mt 10, 17-20.

12, 13-14: There is no chronological link between the preceding passage and this one. The man asks Jesus to settle a purely civil affair because rabbis were customarily called upon to settle such matters in addition to religious, cultic, and criminal cases. But Jesus excluded this temporal affair from his mission. His reply is modeled on Ex 2, 14.

12, 15: The evangelist probably takes this saying of Christ from another context and places it here as an introduction to the parable.

12, 16-21: The parable of the rich fool is found only in Lk. A variant form of this parable (without any literary dependence of one on the other) is found in *The Thousand and one Nights*.

12, 19: Numerous epitaphs composed from phrases of the Epicurean philosophers read, "Eat, drink, play, and come to me."

12, 20: *Fool*: in the biblical sense, one who in his plans disregards God.

12, 22-31: For par see Mt 6, 25-33 n.

- 24 clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storeroom nor barn; yet God feeds them. C
 25 how much more value are you than they! But which c
 you by being anxious about it can add to his stature a sing
 26 cubit? Therefore if you are not able to do even a ve
 little thing, why are you anxious concerning the rest?
 27 "Consider how the lilies grow; they neither toil nor spin
 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory wa
 28 arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass
 which flourishes in the field today but tomorrow is throw
 into the oven, how much more you, O you of little faith
 29 "And as for you, do not seek what you shall eat, c
 30 what you shall drink; and do not exalt yourselves | (fo
 after all these things the nations of the world seek); bu
 31 your Father knows that you need these things. But seek th
 kingdom of God, and all these things shall be given yo
 besides.
 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased you
 33 Father to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and
 give alms. Make for yourselves purses that do not grow old
 a treasure unfailing in heaven, where neither thief draw
 34 near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there
 also will your heart be.

- 35 *The Watchful Servants* "Let your loins be girt about and
 36 your lamps burning, | and you yourselves like men waiting
 for their master's return from the wedding; so that when
 he comes and knocks, they may straightway open to him

12, 25: *To his stature a single cubit?*: "A day to his life" is a better translation.

12, 28: *God so clothes*: see Mt 6, 30 n.

12, 33-34: See par Mt 6, 20-21.

12, 34: See Mt 6, 21 n.

12, 35-40: Used for the Gospel of six Masses.

12, 35-38: A warning to all Christians to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus at the end of the world. This warning is phrased in metaphorical language. To girt one's loins means to tuck up the folds of the garments before beginning to serve the master. The burning lamps mean vigilance. *From the wedding*: happiness in heaven is represented here as a wedding banquet.

12, 37b: Since no oriental master would do such a thing in real life, and since this figure of speech is not used in other passages that refer to the second coming, many commentators believe this to be an allusion to the scene (see Jn 13, 5ff) when Jesus washes the feet of his apostles at the Last Supper. Lk represents Christ here as serving his followers in the same way at the heavenly banquet after his second coming.

37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, on his return, shall find watching. Amen I say to you, he will gird himself, and will make them recline at table, and will come
38 and serve them. And if he comes in the second watch, and if in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants!

39 "But of this be assured, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would certainly have watched, and not have let his house be broken
40 into. You also must be ready, because at an hour that you do not expect, the Son of Man is coming."

41 And Peter said to him, "Lord, dost thou speak this parable for us or for all alike?"

42 *Exhortation to Vigilance* And the Lord said, "Who, dost thou think, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will set over his household to give them their ration
43 of grain in due time? Blessed is that servant whom his
44 master, when he comes, shall find so doing. Truly I say to
45 you, he will set him over all his goods. But if that servant says to himself, 'My master delays his coming,' and begins
46 to beat the menservants and the maids, and to eat and
47 drink, and to get drunk, | the master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect, and in an hour he does not know, and will cut him asunder and make him
48 share the lot of the unfaithful. But that servant who knew his master's will, and did not make ready for him and did not act according to his will, will be beaten with many stripes. Whereas he who did not know it, but did things deserving of stripes, will be beaten with few. But of everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and of him to whom they have entrusted much, they will demand the more.

12, 38: *Second watch*: midnight. *Third*: about sunrise. These two watches refer to the indefinite time of the second coming. The Jews divided the night into three watches, as is reflected in this verse, but the Romans reckoned four watches.

12, 39-40: See par Mt 24, 43-44.

12, 40: A reference to the second coming.

12, 41: Peter asks whether those who are to wait for Christ's second coming (vv. 35-38) are the apostles or all Christians. Jesus answers indirectly in vv. 42-48 that the steward, presumably Peter, and the apostles ("us" of v. 41) must be *faithful* in waiting. The lesson of vv. 35-40 is readiness, that of vv. 42-48 is trustworthiness of those who will be in charge of the Christian community till the second coming.

49 ***The Necessity of Struggle*** "I have come to cast fire upon
 50 the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? But
 have a baptism to be baptized with; and how distressed
 51 am until it is accomplished! Do you think that I came
 to give peace upon the earth? No, I tell you, but division
 52 For henceforth in one house five will be divided, three
 53 against two, and two against three. They will be divided
 father against son and son against his father; mother against
 daughter and daughter against the mother; mother-in-law
 against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her
 mother-in-law."

54 ***Time for Reconciliation*** And he said also to the crowd
 "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once
 55 'A shower is coming,' and so it comes to pass. And when
 you see the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be a scorch-
 56 ing heat,' and so it comes to pass. You hypocrites! you know
 how to judge the face of the sky and of the earth; but
 57 how is it that you do not judge this time? But why even
 of yourselves do you not judge what is right?
 58 "And when thou art going with thy opponent to the
 ruler, take pains to be quit of him on the way; lest he
 deliver thee to the judge, and the judge to the officer
 59 and the officer cast thee into prison. I say to thee, thou
 wilt not come out from it until thou hast paid the very
 last mite."

13

1 ***The Necessity of Repentance*** Now there came at that very
 time some who brought him word about the Galileans
 whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

12, 49: This is not the "fire" of the judgment, of the Holy Spirit
 of enthusiasm, or of zeal for God's cause, but the "fire" of division
 as described in vv. 51-53.

12, 50: The "baptism" in the sense of suffering, alludes to the
 Passion of Christ. This allusion is also found in Mk 10, 38.

12, 51-53: See Mt 10, 35-36 n.

12, 54-56: Jesus is emphasizing that the moment for decision has
 arrived.

12, 55: In Palestine it is not the south wind but the east wind
 that brings heat.

12, 56: *This time*: the time of the arrival of the kingdom of Jesus.

12, 57: This verse introduces vv. 58-59.

12, 58-59: See the allegorical interpretation in par Mt 5, 25-26.

13, 1-5: These twin events, otherwise unknown, happened at Jeru-
 salem, but Jesus may not have spoken about them there. He us-

2 And he answered and said to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other
3 Galileans, because they have suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same
4 manner. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloe fell and killed them; do you think that they were more
5 guilty than all the other dwellers in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same manner."

6 *A Barren Fig Tree* And he spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came
7 seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said to the vine-dresser, 'Behold, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down,
8 therefore; why does it still encumber the ground?' But he answered him and said, 'Sir, let it alone this year too, till I
9 dig around it and manure it. Perhaps it may bear fruit; but if not, then afterwards thou shalt cut it down.'"

10 *A Stooped Woman* Now he was teaching in one of their
11 synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent over and utterly unable to look
12 upwards. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said to her, "Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity." And he laid his hand upon her, and instantly she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, addressed the crowd, saying, "There are six days in which one ought to work; on these therefore

the example of the death of the people in the twin disasters as a symbol of ruin for the whole nation if the people do not repent. The stage is now set for repentance in the parable of the barren fig tree (vv. 6-9), even though in itself the parable emphasizes the hopeful note of delaying the menacing catastrophe.

13, 6-9: Whereas incentive to conversion is the lesson to be drawn from this fig tree parable, the lesson taught by the cursing and withering of the fig tree (see Mk 11, 14 n) is that the fate of Israel is sealed.

13, 10-17: The focal point of interest is not the cure but the Sabbath controversy.

13, 11: *By a spirit*: according to the thinking of the times, the illness was attributed to the devil. The words of Jesus (v. 16) reflect this thinking.

13, 13: As always, the gestures Jesus used in curing are purely symbolic.

15 come and be cured, and not on the Sabbath." But the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrites! does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger and lead it forth to water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound, lo, for eighteen years, ought not she to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

17 And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame; and the entire crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 *The Mustard Seed* He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I liken it? | It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast in his own garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air dwelt in its branches."

20 *The Leaven* And again he said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and buried in three measures of flour, until all of it was leavened."

22 *The Narrow Gate* And he passed on through towns and villages, teaching and making his way towards Jerusalem. But someone said to him, "Lord, are only a few to be saved?"

24 But he said to them, | "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. But when the master of the house has entered and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open for us!' And I shall say to you in answer, 'I do not know where you are from.' | Then you shall begin to say, 'We ate and drank

13, 15: *The Lord*: see 7, 13 n.

13, 17: It is typical of Lk to comment on the activity of Jesus.

13, 18-19: For par see Mt 13, 31-32 n.

13, 19: See Mt 13, 32 n.

13, 20-21: See Mt 13, 33 n.

13, 22-30: This passage is composed of several pronouncements made by Jesus which Mt, as was his wont, scattered in five different places of his Gospel.

13, 22: The verse was apparently inserted by Lk to remind his readers of the journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem.

13, 23: The question, which remains unanswered, serves as an introduction to the subsequent verses.

13, 25-27: The door is no longer narrow (as stated in v. 24), but definitely closed after a certain time.

27 in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets.' And he shall say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.
 28 Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.' | There will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast forth outside.
 29 And they will come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and will feast in the
 30 kingdom of God. And behold, there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last."

31 **Jesus and Herod** On that same day certain Pharisees came up, saying to him, "Depart and be on thy way, for Herod
 32 wants to kill thee." And he said to them, "Go and say to that fox, 'Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am to end my course.
 33 Nevertheless, I must go my way today and tomorrow and the next day, for it cannot be that a prophet perish outside Jerusalem.'
 34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou who killest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her
 35 young under her wings, but thou wouldst not! Behold, your house is left to you. And I say to you, you shall not see me until the time comes when you shall say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

14

¹ **A Man with Dropsy** And it came to pass, when he

13, 27: *Depart . . . workers of iniquity*: a quotation from Ps 6, 9.
 13, 30: This isolated saying is used in different accounts by Mt and Mk.

13, 32-33: Jesus will continue his ministry in the territory of Herod Antipas in spite of the latter's threats, and he will die in Jerusalem where so many prophets died.

13, 31: These Pharisees seem friendly.

13, 32: *Fox*: besides the proverbial meaning of craftiness, the epithet may insinuate the impure Jewish blood of Herod Antipas. (See "Political Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament.)

13, 33: Notice the reminder of the journey to Jerusalem.

13, 34-35: See par Mt 23, 37-39.

13, 35: *House*: see Mt 23, 38 n. *Blessed is he . . . of the Lord*: see Mt 23, 39 n.

14, 1-24: The four units of this chapter are most probably artificially framed by Lk in the context of the banquet to which Jesus was invited.

14, 1-6: The center of interest is not the cure but the Sabbath con-

entered the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on
 2 the Sabbath to take food, that they watched him. And
 behold, there was a certain man before him who had the
 3 dropsy. | And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, saying,
 "Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?"

4 But they remained silent. And he took and healed him
 5 and let him go. Then addressing them, he said, "Which
 of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not
 6 immediately draw him up on the Sabbath?" And they could
 give him no answer to these things.

7 *The Last Seat* But he also spoke a parable to those invited,
 observing how they were choosing the first places at table,
 8 and he said to them, | "When thou art invited to a wedding
 feast, do not recline in the first place, lest perhaps one more
 9 distinguished than thou have been invited by him, | and he
 who invited thee and him come and say to thee, 'Make room
 for this man'; and then thou begin with shame to take the
 10 last place. But when thou art invited, go and recline in the
 last place; that when he who invited thee comes in, he may
 say to thee, 'Friend, go up higher!' Then thou wilt be
 honored in the presence of all who are at table with
 11 thee. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled,
 and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

12 *Poor Guests* But he also said to him who had invited
 him, "When thou givest a dinner or a supper, do not invite
 thy friends, or thy brethren, or thy relatives, or thy rich
 neighbors, lest perhaps they also invite thee in return, and a
 13 recompense be made to thee. But when thou givest a feast
 14 invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; | and
 blessed shalt thou be, because they have nothing to repay
 thee with; for thou shalt be repaid at the resurrection of
 the just."

trovery. The story is similar to that of the man with a withered hand
 (Mk 3, 1-6).

14, 5: *Ass*: scholars favor the Greek manuscripts which read, "son."

14, 7-11: The homespun advice on how to avoid shame and win
 admiration at a banquet is an example of the divine-human dealings
 enunciated in v. 11. It is difficult to believe that Jesus would lecture
 his fellow guests in this manner, but see 14, 1-24 n.

14, 11: See par Mt 23, 12.

14, 12-14: It is difficult to believe that Jesus would advise his
 host in this way, but see 14, 1-24 n.

14, 13-14: This recommendation is exemplified in the parable
 (vv. 16-24).

15 **Parable of a Great Supper** Now when one of those who were at table with him had heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is he who shall feast in the kingdom of God."

16 But he said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper,
17 and he invited many. And he sent his servant at supper time to tell those invited to come, for everything is now
18 ready. And they all with one accord began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, 'I have bought a farm, and I must go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused.'
19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them; I pray thee hold me excused.'
20 And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

"And the servant returned, and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house was angry and said to his servant. 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and
22 the crippled, and the blind, and the lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, thy order has been carried out, and still there is
23 room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and make them come in, so that
24 my house may be filled. For I tell you that none of those who were invited shall taste of my supper.'"

25 **Following of Christ** Now great crowds were going along
26 with him. And he turned and said to them, | "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his
27 own life, he cannot be my disciple. And he who does not carry his cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple.
28 "For which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not

14, 15: In the Old Testament, the Messianic kingdom of God was pictured as a banquet; in New Testament times, the kingdom of heaven was pictured the same way.

14, 16-24: See Mt 22, 1-14 n. The lesson of the parable is that the Jewish religious leaders will be excluded from the kingdom of God, but the poor, the sinners, and the pagans will eventually enter it.

14, 23: *Make them come in*: through persistent exhortations.

14, 25-35: The evangelist knits together a series of Christ's sayings and situates them in the open streets among enthusiastic crowds (v. 25).

14, 25: The verse may be a veiled allusion to the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem.

14, 26-27: These two sayings are used by Mt 10, 37f in his missionary discourse.

14, 28-30: A parable characteristic of Lk's narration.

14, 28: *Tower*: not a fort, but a large farm building.

- sit down first and calculate the outlays that are necessary
 29 whether he has the means to complete it? Lest, after he has
 laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who behold
 30 begin to mock him | saying, "This man began to build and
 was not able to finish!"
- 31 "Or what king setting out to engage in battle with
 another king, does not sit down first and consider whether
 he is able with ten thousand men to meet him who with
 32 twenty thousand is coming against him? Or else, whilst the
 other is yet at a distance, he sends a delegation and asks
 33 the terms of peace. So, therefore, every one of you who
 does not renounce all that he possesses, cannot be my disciple.
- 34 "Salt is good; but if even the salt loses its strength,
 35 what shall it be seasoned with? It is fit neither for the
 land nor for the manure heap, but must be thrown out. He
 who has ears to hear, let him hear."

15

- 1 *The Lost Sheep* Now the publicans and sinners were draw-
 2 ing near to him to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the
 Scribes murmured, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and
 eats with them."
- 3.4 But he spoke to them this parable, saying, "What man
 of you having a hundred sheep, and losing one of them,
 does not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after
 5 that which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found
 6 it, he lays it upon his shoulders rejoicing. And on coming
 home he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying
 to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep

14, 31-32: Again a parable found only in this Gospel.

14, 33: This verse imparts a unified meaning to the preceding twin parables. The meaning is that the "resources" necessary for a disciple of Christ lie in the willingness to renounce everything.

14, 34-35: The saying on salt is found in the Sermon on the Mount. (See Mt 5, 13 n.) If the saying means that an indifferent disciple is like insipid salt, then there is only a loose connection between vv. 34-35 and the foregoing vv. 25-33 on the qualities of a disciple.

15, 1-10: Judging from the twin parables, Jesus may have delivered them in reply to those who questioned his association with the socially inferior. In fact, from here to 18, 14 the section has been labeled the "gospel of the outcasts."

15, 4-7: See par Mt 18, 12-14 for the same parable, but in a different setting, with a different application, and without the vivid details of Lk's account. Even the Greek vocabulary differs appreciably.

7 that was lost.' I say to you that, even so, there will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance.

8 **The Lost Coin** "Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma that I had lost.' Even so, I say to you, there will be joy among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

11 **The Prodigal Son** And he said, "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his means between them.

13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered up all his wealth, and took his journey into a far country; and there he squandered his fortune in loose living. And after he had spent all, there came a grievous famine over that country, and he began himself to suffer want. And he went and joined one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his farm to feed swine. And he longed to fill himself with the pods that the swine were eating, but no one offered to give them to him.

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many hired men in my father's house have bread in abundance, while I am perishing here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no longer worthy to

15, 7: *Joy in heaven*: a circumlocution of the expression "joy in God," to avoid attributing human emotion to God. "Joy among the angels of God" (v. 10) must be similarly understood. For the main lesson see 15, 10 n.

15, 8: *Drachma*: this silver Greek coin equaled a day's wage for a laborer.

15, 10: See 15, 7 n. The main lesson of the two parables is not the repentance of the sinner, but the diligent search made for him by Jesus which brings joy to God (see 15, 1-10 n).

15, 11-32: For its beauty in form and thought, this is generally considered the pearl of all the parables of Jesus told in the Gospels. This biblical story is not tarnished because a variant version of it exists in Buddhist literature, for there is no likely dependence of one story on the other.

15, 11-24: Differently from the preceding twin parables (see 15, 10 n), the prodigal son himself repents.

be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired men.
 20 And he arose and went to his father.

"But while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no longer worthy to be called thy son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Fetch quickly the best robe and put it on him, and give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet; and bring out the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And calling one of the servants he inquired what this meant. And he said to him, 'Thy brother has come, and thy father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe.' But he was angered and would not go in.

"His father, therefore, came out and began to entreat him. But he answered and said to his father, 'Behold, these many years I have been serving thee, and have never transgressed one of thy commands; and yet thou hast never given me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this thy son comes, who has devoured his means with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fattened calf.'

31 "But he said to him, 'Son, thou art always with me,

15, 22-23: The typical oriental manner of honoring a special guest.

15, 22: *Ring*: the mark of authority on the estate.

15, 25-32: The focal point of interest is not the return of the prodigal son, nor the contrast between the two sons, but the contrasting attitude of the father and the elder son toward the younger son. The prodigal represents sinners and outcasts as in the preceding twin parables. Biblical critics disagree on whether the elder son represents the Pharisees or the just people in general. Regardless, the elder son symbolizes the granite, pious personality that is overly conscious of following God's law (v. 29), and censorious of those who do not. The father, the true hero of the story, represents God whose abounding goodness wants to save sinners. Contrast the God of love here and the God of obedience in the parable of the two sons (Mt 21, 28-32). However, according to some modern critics, the teaching of the parable is one of a merciful God without Christ's cross of suffering, or his redeeming death. These critics overlook the fact that the prodigal himself first decided to repent and to carry out his resolution.

15, 30: The attitudes of the two sons are described in detail to highlight the irrefutable response of the father.

32 and all that is mine is thine; but we were bound to make merry and rejoice, for this thy brother was dead, and has come to life; he was lost, and is found.' "

16

- 1 *The Unjust Steward* And he said also to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, who
2 was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear of thee? Make an accounting of thy stewardship, for thou canst be steward no longer.'
3 "And the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do, seeing that my master is taking away the stewardship from
4 me? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed. | I know what I shall do, that when I am removed from my steward-
5 ship they may receive me into their houses.' And he summoned each of his master's debtors and said to the first,
6 'How much dost thou owe my master?' | And he said, 'A hundred jars of oil.' He said to him, 'Take thy bond
7 and sit down at once and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'How much dost thou owe?' He said, 'A hundred kors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take thy bond and write eighty.'
8 "And the master commended the unjust steward, in that he had acted prudently; for the children of this world, in relation to their own generation, are more prudent than the

15, 32: Perhaps in no other Gospel passage is God the Father as ready to forgive better portrayed than in this parable.

16, 1-31: It is more probable that Jesus did not deliver these three talks together; Lk grouped them into this chapter (except vv. 16-18) to illustrate Christ's attitude toward earthly goods.

16, 1-13: This is probably the most difficult of all the parables. Especially the meaning of its main lesson remains in the dark, but there is no adequate interpretation of the entire parable.

16, 1-7: The steward probably represents the Jewish leaders who treat the outcasts roughly.

16, 6: *A hundred jars of oil*: some experts estimate this to mean a thousand gallons of olive oil. *Bond*: invoice.

16, 7: *Kors*: bushels.

16, 8: It is difficult for scholars to decide whether this verse is a conclusion by Jesus or by Lk, but it is an interpretation of the foregoing parable (vv. 1-7). *The master*: in Greek, "the Lord" (*kurios*), refers either to the "rich man" (v. 1) or to Jesus. Nevertheless, the foresight of the steward, not the immorality of his acts, is praised. (We ourselves may marvel at a clever thief's resourcefulness but we would not praise the injustice of his act.) *The children of the lights*: those who are concerned with spiritual matters should act just as pru-

9 children of the light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves with the mammon of wickedness, so that when you fail they may receive you into the everlasting dwellings

10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much, and he who is unjust in a very little thing is unjust also in much. Therefore, if in the case of the wicked mammon you have not proved faithful, who will entrust to you

11 what is true? And if in the case of what belongs to another you have not proved faithful, who will give you what is your

12 own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

14 *Pretenses of the Pharisees* Now the Pharisees, who were fond of money, were listening to all these things, and

15 they began to sneer at him. And he said to them, "You are they who declare yourselves just in the sight of men, but God knows your heart; for that which is exalted in the

dently as the "children of this world" (epitomized by the steward) who are concerned with temporal matters. This interpretation is preferable to that which understands the contrast between the children to refer to a contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles.

16, 9: *With the mammon of wickedness*: with the aid of wealth gained in a wicked manner (see 16, 10-11 n). *When you fail*: in Greek, "when it shall fail." *The everlasting dwellings*: an everlasting home. V. 9 may be another independent interpretation of the parable, possibly by Jesus, because of his characteristic "And I say to you." One explanation of this verse is that Jesus urges snug people to use their "wicked" wealth to make friends by selling all and giving to the poor, so that when their wealth is spent the poor in heaven may receive them there.

16, 10-11: V. 10 seems to be a general principle which is not related to any of the preceding verses, but v. 11 applies this principle thus: if you have not correctly used worldly wealth ("wicked mammon"), which connotes something false, not lasting, you will not be entrusted with heavenly wealth ("what is true," i.e., lasting).

16, 12: This verse is another application of the general principle of v. 10, namely: if you were not faithful in the proper use of worldly wealth ("what belongs to another"), how will you be faithful in the use of heavenly wealth ("what is your own")?

16, 13: This is another independent saying of all the preceding verses except for the verbal link of the word "mammon." V. 13 warns against substituting the service of wealth for the service of God. This saying (v. 13), which is used in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6, 24), is not concerned with the correct use of wealth as are vv. 10-12.

16, 14: The evangelist seems to have added this verse to connect it with the idea of wealth in the preceding parable of the unjust steward (vv. 1-13) and at the same time to tie v. 14 with v. 15 to set the stage for the parable of Lazarus (vv. 19-31).

- 16 sight of men is an abomination before God. Until John came, there were the Law and the Prophets; since then the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is
- 17 forcing his way into it. Yet it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the Law to fail.
- 18 "Everyone who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries a woman who has been put away from her husband commits adultery.
- 19 *The Rich Man and Lazarus* "There was a certain rich man who used to clothe himself in purple and fine linen,
- 20 and who feasted every day in splendid fashion. And there was a certain poor man, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate,
- 21 covered with sores, and longing to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs
- 22 would come and lick his sores. And it came to pass that the poor man died and was borne away by the angels into Abraham's bosom; but the rich man also died and was buried
- 23 in hell. And lifting up his eyes, being in torments, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'
- 24 "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime hast received good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now here he is comforted whereas

16, 16-18: Lk assembles three sayings which are disconnected with the rest of ch. 16 and are used in three different places in Mt's Gospel.

16, 16: For par see Mt 11, 12 n.

16, 17: For par see Mt 5, 18 n.

16, 18: For par see Mt 19, 9 n.

16, 19-31: This parable, peculiar to Lk, may represent the Jewish leaders (*Dives*) who treat the outcasts (*Lazarus*) rudely. There is no historical basis to this parable.

16, 19: *Rich*: the well-known "*dives*" is not a proper name but the adjective for rich (man) from the Latin Vg.

16, 21: *Dogs would come and lick his sores*: not out of tenderness, but out of hunger. Besides the physical degradation, there are overtones of the ritual degradation since a dog was "impure."

16, 22-23: *In hell. And lifting up his eyes*: the Greek literally reads: "And from *hades*, lifting up his eyes . . ."

16, 22: See 16, 26 n. *Abraham's bosom*: see Mt 8, 11 n.

16, 24: *Dip the tip of his finger . . . my tongue*: this recalls a well-known gift to the dead by Osiris, the Egyptian god. Vv. 19-26 show, according to scholars, a similarity to, but not dependence on, an Egyptian folk tale.

26 thou art tormented. And besides all that, between us and you a great gulf is fixed, so that they who wish to pass over from this side to you cannot, and they cannot cross from your side to us.'

27 "And he said, 'Then, father, I beseech thee to send him
28 to my father's house, | for I have five brothers, that he
may testify to them, lest they too come into this place of
29 torments.' And Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses
30 and the Prophets, let them hearken to them.' But he answered, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead
31 goes to them, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hearken to Moses and the Prophets, they will not believe even if someone rises from the dead.' "

17

1 *Avoiding Scandal* And he said to his disciples, "It is impossible that scandals should not come; but woe to him
2 through whom they come! It were better for him if a millstone were hung about his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

3 *Forgiveness of Injuries* "Take heed to yourselves. If thy
4 brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if seven times in the day he sin against thee, and seven times in the day turn back to thee, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

5 *Efficacy of Faith* And the apostles said to the Lord, "In-

16, 26: *Gulf*: this topographical detail and the facility given to the saved and the damned to converse (vv. 23ff) but not to visit one another are not meant literally here; they are more common to the contemporary literature of Greek religion than to Jewish literature. Another detail, not meant literally and belonging to the same type of Greek literature, is that of the angels carrying souls to paradise (v. 22).

16, 29: *Moses and the Prophets*: they epitomize the Old Testament.

16, 31: The lesson here is not that the Old Testament teaches that the damned will be gathered into eternal hell fire, but that the Old Testament teaches sufficiently well how to be saved. If the rich man's brothers reject this ordinary way of salvation, then not even a miraculous resurrection will make them believe. Jesus himself after his resurrection did not try to persuade those who had disbelieved him during his ministry.

17, 2: For par see Mt 18, 6 n.

17, 4: See Mt 18, 21-22 n.

6 crease our faith." And the Lord answered, "If you have faith even like a mustard seed, you will say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

7 *The Unprofitable Servant* "But which of you is there, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, who will say to him on his return from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table!' But will he not say to him, 'Prepare my supper, and gird thyself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk; and afterwards thou thyself shalt eat and drink? Does he thank that servant for doing what he commanded him? I do not think so. Even so you also, when you have done everything that was commanded you, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what it was our duty to do.'"

11 *Ten Lepers* And it came to pass as he was going to Jerusalem, that he was passing between Samaria and Galilee. And as he was entering a certain village, there met him ten lepers, who stood afar off | and lifted up their voice, crying, 14 "Jesus, master, have pity on us." | And when he saw them he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And it came to pass as they were on their way, that they were made clean. 15 But one of them, seeing that he was made clean, returned, 16 with a loud voice glorifying God, | and he fell on his face at his feet, giving thanks; and he was a Samaritan. 17 But Jesus answered and said, "Were not the ten made 18 clean? But where are the nine? | Has no one been found 19 to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?" And

17, 6: Compare Mk 11, 23.

17, 7-10: Only found in this Gospel.

17, 7: *Servant*: in Greek, "slave." The conditions described agree with those of slaves at that time. The parable warns that a person must not demand something from God just because he did something extra for God.

17, 11-19: The account is peculiar to Lk, but compare Mk 1, 40-45 where the curing of one leper is described.

17, 11: The evangelist again quietly refers to Christ's journey toward Jerusalem.

17, 14: *Show yourselves to the priests*: Jewish lepers customarily reported to the priests at Jerusalem (see Mt 8, 4 n), but it is not clear where the Samaritan was to report, at Jerusalem or at his temple on Mount Garizim? (See 10, 33 n.)

17, 16: Samaritans were despised by Jews.

17, 17: The nine are most probably Jews.

17, 18: The center of interest in the parable is not the miracle but the gratitude of the Samaritan.

he said to him, "Arise, go thy way, for thy faith has saved thee."

- 20 *Coming of the Kingdom of God* And on being asked by the Pharisees, "When is the kingdom of God coming?" he answered and said to them, "The kingdom of God comes
21 unawares. Neither will they say, 'Behold, here it is,' or 'Behold, there it is.' For behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
22 But he said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one day of the Son of Man, and will
23 not see it. And they will say to you, 'Behold, here he is; behold, there he is.' Do not go, nor follow after them. For as
24 the lightning when it lightens flashes from one end of the sky to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. But
25 first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.
26 "And as it came to pass in the days of Noe, even so will
27 it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noe entered the ark, and the flood came and
28 destroyed them all. Or as it came to pass in the days of Lot. They were eating and drinking, they were buying and selling,
29 they were planting and building; | but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from
30 heaven and destroyed them all. In the same wise will it be
31 on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. In that hour let him who is on the housetop and his goods in the house, not go down to take them away; and likewise let him who
32.33 is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Who-

17, 20-37: Much of this discourse, peculiar to Lk, has been incorporated into the eschatological discourse of Mt 24, 5-41.

17, 21: *Within you*: although the Greek says, "within you," in this context it seems to mean "among you," or "within your grasp." This verse has a long history of debate.

17, 22: *Days*: the era. *Day*: according to the rest of the discourse, not a protracted period of time but a determined moment of time is meant, namely: the second coming of Christ. There are other equally probable opinions of this obscure verse.

17, 24: See Mt 24, 27 n.

17, 25: An allusion to the Passion of Jesus.

17, 26-30: The point here is not the wickedness of the people but their unconcern about the imminent catastrophe. The generation of Christ's era was similarly unconcerned about God's imminent judgment.

17, 33: Fleeing from danger to save one's life is no excuse for denying Christ. See a different use of this verse in Mk 8, 35.

- ever tries to save his life will lose it; and whoever loses
 34 it will preserve it. I say to you, on that night there will
 be two on one bed; one will be taken, and the other
 35 will be left. Two women will be grinding together; one will
 be taken, and the other will be left. Two men will be in the
 field; one will be taken, and the other will be left."
 36 And they answered and said to him, "Where, Lord?"
 37 He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there will the
 eagles be gathered together."

18

- ¹ *The Godless Judge* And he also told them a parable—that
 2 they must always pray and not lose heart—| saying, "There
 was a judge in a certain town who did not fear God and
 3 did not respect man. Now there was a certain widow in that
 town, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Do me justice
 4 against my adversary.' And he would not for a long time.
 But afterwards he said within himself, 'Although I do not
 5 fear God, nor even respect man, | yet because this widow
 bothers me, I will do her justice, lest by her continual coming
 she finally wear me out.'"
 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge says;
 7 | and will not God avenge his elect, who cry to him day and
 8 night? And will he be slow to act in their case? | I tell you
 that he will avenge them quickly. Yet when the Son of
 Man comes, will he find, do you think, faith on the earth?"

17, 34-35: See Mt 24, 40-41 n.

17, 35: *Two men . . . will be left*: an interpolation from Mt 24, 40.

17, 37: For par see Mt 24, 28 n.

18, 1-8: This parable on the persistent petitioner is narrated in Lk only and it resembles that of the man who seeks the help of a friend at midnight (11, 5-8). The core of the parable is: if an unjust judge will redress the wrong of a client merely because of the client's persistence, will not God hear his chosen ones and intervene to avenge them on their enemies? The nature of the intervention and of the persecution remains obscure. Consequently, the central figure of the parable is not the defenseless widow but the unjust judge who is compared to the just judge, God. By the same token, the center of the comparison is not the persistent petition but the certainty that it is heard.

18, 2: The description of the judge throughout this parable agrees well with the description of judges found in the Old Testament.

18, 7: The persecutors are not identified.

18, 8b: *Yet when the Son of Man comes, . . . faith on the earth?*: since this saying does not refer to the parable of vv. 1-8a, it is considered an isolated saying which Lk inserted here. Its meaning is not clear.

- 9 *The Pharisee and the Publican* But he spoke this parable also to some who trusted in themselves as being just and despised others. "Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and began to pray thus within himself: 'O God, I thank thee that I am not like the rest of men, robbers, dishonest, adulterers, or even like this publican. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I possess.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven but kept striking his breast, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me the sinner!'"
- 14 "I tell you, this man went back to his home justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

18, 9-14: This famous parable on prayer, peculiar to Luke, resumes the theme of the Jewish leaders versus the outcasts. See 15, 1-10 n.

18, 10: *Publican*: tax collector. The Pharisee represented the highest ideal for a Jew. He was completely dedicated to the Mosaic Law, the noblest way of living in accordance with faith and morals. The opposite extreme of Jewish ideals was symbolized by the tax collector (see Mk 2, 15 n).

18, 11-12: Standing was the normal Jewish posture for prayer, not a sign of pride. The tax collector also stands (v. 13). Everything he says is true.

18, 12-13: *Fast*: see Mt 9, 14 n. The prayer of the Pharisee shows that he is satisfied with his spiritual accomplishments; he has no need of pardon, for in his opinion he has done no wrong. He makes no petition. The gravest defect of his piety is his belief that he does not need God's mercy and grace for salvation. To illustrate that Jesus in no way exaggerates the prayer of the Pharisee, scholars point out a similar prayer of a Pharisee in the Babylonian Talmud.

The prayer of the tax collector focuses not on a comparison with others, but on his own faults.

18, 14: *This man went back*: Jesus says in the parable that only the tax collector was forgiven his sins. *Humbled . . . exalted*. Scholars discuss whether this general saying was added by Jesus, or whether it was added by the evangelist, or by "tradition." The parable is complete without it, and it does not express the lesson of the parable. The Pharisee was not humbled. The saying seems to refer to the reversal of fortunes at the end of the world.

The travelogue on the journey to Jerusalem, which began in 9, 51 ends here insofar as the evangelist's own material ends here (even though our Lord's entry into Jerusalem is described in 19, 45). This "Great Insertion" of Lk's material into the main stream of Mk's Gospel, which Lk followed, corresponds to what scholars call Lk's "Great Omission," namely, the omission of Mk 6, 45-8, 26. According to the common opinion, Lk omitted this section of Mk because it was not of sufficient interest to him. (See the "sources" in the Introduction to the Gospel of Luke.)

15 *Jesus Blesses the Children* Now they were bringing the babes also to him that he might touch them; but when the
 16 disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them together and said, "Let the little children come to me, and
 17 do not hinder them, for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as a little child will not enter into it."

18 *The Danger of Riches* And a certain ruler asked him, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to gain eternal life?"
 19 But Jesus said to him, "Why dost thou call me good? No
 20 one is good but only God. Thou knowest the commandments: "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and mother."

21 And he said, "All these I have kept ever since I was a
 22 child." But when Jesus heard this, he said to him, "One thing is still lacking to thee; sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and
 23 come, follow me." When he heard these things, he was much grieved, for he was very rich.

24 But Jesus, seeing him become sad, said, "With what difficulty will they who have riches enter the kingdom of God!
 25 For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
 26 And they who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"
 27 He said to them, "Things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

28 And Peter said, "Behold, we have left all and followed
 29 thee." And he said to them, "Amen I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or
 30 children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, | who shall not receive much more in the present time, and in the age to come life everlasting."

18, 15-17: See par Mk 10, 13-16.

18, 15: *Touch*: see Mk 10, 13 n.

18, 16: *The kingdom of God*: see 10, 15 n.

18, 18-30: See par Mt 19, 16-30.

18, 18-19: See Mt 19, 16-17 n.

18, 20: See Ex 20, 12-16; Dt 5, 16-20.

18, 25: A Semitic hyperbole.

18, 26-27: See Mt 19, 26 n.

18, 30: *Age to come*: see its parallel expression "regeneration" as explained in Mt 19, 28 n.

- 31 ***The Third Prediction of the Passion*** But Jesus taking himself the Twelve said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that have been written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For he will be delivered to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and scourged and spit upon; | and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again."
- 34 And they understood none of these things and this saying was hidden from them, neither did they get to know the things that were being said.

6

- 35 ***A Blind Man at Jericho*** Now it came to pass as he drew near to Jericho, that a certain blind man was sitting by the wayside, begging; but hearing a crowd passing by, he inquired what this might be. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" | And they who went in front angrily tried to silence him. But he cried out all the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" | Then Jesus stopped and commanded that he should be brought to him.
- 41 And when he drew near, he asked him, | saying, "What wouldst thou have me do for thee?" And he said, "Lord, that I may see." | And Jesus said to him, "Receive thy sight, thy faith has saved thee." And at once he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people upon seeing it gave praise to God.

19

- 1 ***Zacchaeus the Publican*** And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold there was a man named Zac

18, 31-33: For par see Mt 20, 17-19 n. This blindness of the apostles is contrasted with the blindness of the man at Jericho in vv 35-43.

18, 31: In the three predictions of the Passion, only Lk speaks of the fulfillment of scripture.

18, 35-43: For par see Mt 20, 29-34 n.

18, 39: Only this Gospel's account has "Son of David."

18, 43: In the parallel accounts of this miracle, only Lk mentions the people praising God.

19, 1-10: Peculiar to Luke.

19, 2: *Zacchaeus*: in Hebrew, it means "the pure one." *Publican* see Mk 2, 15 n.

- ³ chaeus; and he was a leading publican, and he was rich. And he was trying to see Jesus, who he was, but could not, on
- ⁴ account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was going to pass that way.
- ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay in thy house today."
- ⁶ And he made haste and came down, and welcomed him
- ⁷ joyfully. And upon seeing it all began to murmur, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."
- ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, I give one-half of my possessions to the poor; and if I have
- ⁹ defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since
- ¹⁰ he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
- ¹¹ *Parable of the Gold Pieces* Now as they were listening to these things, he went on to speak a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.
- ¹² He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to obtain for himself a kingdom and then return.
- ¹³ And having summoned ten of his servants, he gave them ten gold pieces and said to them, 'Trade till I come.'

19, 3: Zacchaeus tried to see what Jesus looked like.

19, 8: The gracious favor of Jesus and his personality converted Zacchaeus, so that he made a promise for the future even though the sentence reads in the present.

19, 9-10: The answer of Jesus is not in testimony of the publican's conversion but in justification of his stay at the house of Zacchaeus who was a Jew and a lost sinner. Christ came for the salvation of Jewish sinners also.

19, 9: Perhaps it is principally because of this verse that vv. 1-10 are used as the Gospel for the dedication of a church.

19, 11: The evangelist inserts this verse here to connect the preceding anecdote with the parable told in vv. 12-27. The "they" refers to the disciples. The purpose of the parable was to dispel the notion that the "kingdom of God was going to appear immediately." Jesus had to die first before returning a second time at the end of the world. Meanwhile there would be a time of trial. Hence this parable had the same purpose as that of the talents (Mt 25, 14-30).

19, 12: The nobleman, with the hope of obtaining the right to become king, is going abroad to visit his overlord.

19, 13: *Ten gold pieces*: Literally, "ten minas." One mina or one gold piece equaled about three months' wages for a laborer. Dur-

- 14 "But his citizens hated him; and they sent a delegation
after him to say, "We do not wish this man to be king
15 over us.' And it came to pass when he had returned, after
receiving the kingdom, that he ordered the servants to whom
he had given the money to be called to him in order that
he might learn how much each one had made by trading.
16 "And the first came, saying, 'Lord, thy gold piece has
17 earned ten gold pieces.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good
servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, thou
shalt have authority over ten towns.'
18 "Then the second came, saying, 'Lord, thy gold piece has
19 made five gold pieces.' And he said to him, 'Be thou also
over five towns.'
20 "And another came, saying, 'Lord, behold thy gold piece
21 which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee
because thou art a stern man. Thou takest up what thou
didst not lay down, and thou reapest what thou didst not
22 sow.' He said to him, 'Out of thy own mouth I judge thee
thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am a stern man
taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not
23 sow. Why, then, didst thou not put my money in a bank,
so that I on my return might have gotten it with interest?
24 And he said to the bystanders, 'Take away the gold piece
from him, and give it to him who has the ten gold pieces.'
25 But they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten gold pieces.'
26 "I say to you that to everyone who has shall be given;

ing the nobleman's absence, his servants were to be tested on their ability to invest, and on their fidelity to him.

19, 14: It is often claimed that this is probably an allusion to Archelaus who traveled to Rome in 4 B.C. to ask Augustus personally to succeed his (Archelaus') father, Herod the Great, as king. Fifty Jewish representatives also appeared in Rome to oppose his succession to the throne. Rome compromised by giving Archelaus only part of his father's kingdom with the title of tetrarch, not of king (see v. 27). Whether the allusion is historically true or not, the allegorical interpretation is that the nobleman represents Jesus who goes to a distant land (heaven) to return as king. The delegation of citizens who oppose the Messiah-king are the Jewish leaders (though, in the allegory, the delegation does not appear before God).

19, 15: *After receiving the kingdom*: after he was crowned king.

19, 22: *Wicked servant*: unprofitable servant.

19, 24: This command would be unlikely in real life because the first servant was already rewarded, but it is meant to stress its religious meaning, namely: be certain to use God's gifts.

19, 25: The objection of the bystanders that the servant already has ten gold pieces prepares the response given in v. 26.

19, 26: The punishment lies in depriving the incapable servant of his idle capital. The allegorical meaning is that Christ's dis-

but from him who does not have, even that which he has
 27 shall be taken away. But as for these my enemies, who did
 not want me to be king over them, bring them here and
 slay them in my presence."

28 And when he had said these things, he went ahead, going
 up to Jerusalem.

29 *Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem* And it came to pass,
 when he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the moun-
 30 tain called Olivet, that he sent two of his disciples, | saying,
 "Go into the village opposite; on entering it you will find a
 colt of an ass tied, upon which no man ever yet sat; loose
 31 it and bring it. And if anyone ask you, 'Why are you loosing
 it?' you shall answer him thus, 'Because the Lord has need
 of it.'"

32 And they who were sent went away and found the colt
 33 standing, even as he had told them. And as they were loos-
 ing the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you loosing
 34 the colt?" And they replied, "Because the Lord has need of
 it."

35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks
 36 over the colt they set Jesus on it. And as he went, they kept
 37 spreading their cloaks upon the road. And when he was
 drawing near, being by now at the descent of the Mount of
 Olives, the whole company of the disciples began to rejoice
 and to praise God with a loud voice for all the miracles that
 38 they had seen, | saying, "Blessed is he who comes as king,
 in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the
 highest!"

ciples (and all Christians) will be rewarded in proportion to their
 use of God's gifts. See Mt 25, 29 n.

19, 27: This characteristic vengeance of an oriental king is an
 allegorical explanation of the condemnation that will be meted out
 on judgment day at the second coming of Christ to the incredulous
 Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus. The relationship between the
 foregoing parable and the parable of the talents (Mt 25, 18-30),
 even though the basic framework is identical in both, is open to these
 opinions: they may both be independent; Lk may have adapted Mt's
 parable; Lk may have adapted this parable from the source material
 that Mt used for his parable (on the talents).

19, 29-38: See par Mt 21, 1-11.

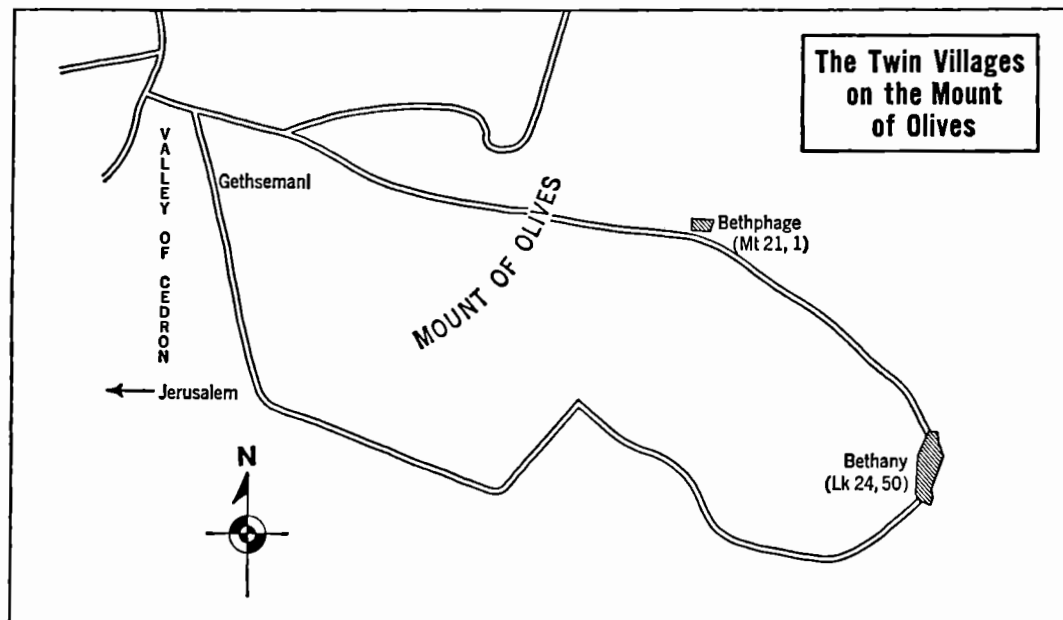
19, 29: *Bethphage . . . Olivet*: see Mt 21, 1 n.

19, 30-38: See Mt 21, 2-9 n.

19, 31-32: See Mt 21, 2-3 n.

19, 34: *The Lord*: see Mt 21, 3 n.

19, 38: *Blessed is he who comes as king, in the name of the Lord*:
 Lk inserted "as king," but for the rest of the phrase see Ps 117, 26 n.



39 "And some of the Pharisees from the crowds said to him,
40 "Master, rebuke thy disciples." | He said to them, "I tell
you that if these keep silence, the stones will cry out."

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it,
42 saying, | "If thou hadst known, in this thy day, even thou,
the things that are for thy peace! But now they are hidden
43 from thy eyes. For days will come upon thee when thy
enemies will throw up a rampart about thee, and surround
44 thee and shut thee in on every side, | and will dash thee to
the ground and thy children within thee, and will not leave
in thee one stone upon another, because thou hast not known
the time of thy visitation."

45 *Cleansing of the Temple* And he entered the temple, and
began to cast out those who were selling and buying in it, |
46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of
prayer,' but you have made it a den of thieves."

47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief
priests and the Scribes and the leading men of the people
48 sought to destroy him; but they found nothing that they
could do to him, for all the people hung upon his words.

20

¹ *The Authority of Jesus* And it came to pass on one of the
days, as he was teaching the people in the temple and preach-
ing the gospel, that the chief priests and Scribes together with

"Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!": this is an echo from Mt 2, 14. The meaning may be that God prepared peace in heaven with the intent of lavishing it on men.

19, 40: This hyperbole may derive from Heb 2, 11.

19, 42: The meaning is: if only you [Jerusalem] also (as the disciples in vv. 37-39) had known the message of peace that God intended for you through the Messiah.

19, 43-44: Many Christian scholars hold that Jesus predicted the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, even though the final writing of his prediction may have been touched up after the fall in 70 A.D. The "touching up" may possibly include Lk's interpretation (or that of the early Christians) that the fall of Jerusalem was a punishment of Jewish incredulity ("because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation").

19, 45-48: The evangelist abbreviates the par narratives of Mk (see Mk 11, 15-19 n; compare also par Mt 21, 12-17).

19, 45: *Temple . . . selling and buying*: see Mk 11, 15 n.

19, 46: *Den of thieves*: an echo of Jer 7, 11.

20, 1-8: See par Mt 21, 23-27. Lk's account differs from the parallel accounts of Mt and Mk insofar as it has this event happen not on the day of the cleansing of the temple, but "on one of the days, as he

2 the elders came up | and spoke to him, saying, "Tell us, by
 3 what authority dost thou do these things? Or who is it that
 4 gave thee this authority?" But he answered and said to
 5 them, "I also will ask you one question. Answer me: | was
 6 the baptism of John from heaven, or from men?" But they
 7 began to argue among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From
 8 heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'
 9 But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us;
 10 for they are convinced that John was a prophet." And they
 11 answered that they did not know whence it was. Then Jesus
 12 said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do
 13 these things."

9 *Parable of the Vine-Dressers* But he began to speak to
 the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, and let
 10 it out to vine-dressers, and went abroad for a long time. And
 at the proper time he sent a servant to the vine-dressers, that
 they might give him part of the fruit of the vineyard; but
 11 they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he
 sent yet a second servant; but him also they beat, and
 12 treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. And
 he sent yet a third; but him also they wounded and
 13 cast out. But the owner of the vineyard said, 'What
 shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps when they
 see him, they will respect him.'
 14 "But the vine-dressers, on seeing him, argued with one
 another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him, that the
 15 inheritance may become ours.' So they cast him out of the
 vineyard and killed him. What therefore will the owner of
 16 the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those
 vine-dressers, and will give the vineyard to others."

Upon hearing this, they said to him, "By no means."
 17 But he looked on them and said, "What then is this that is
 written, 'The stone which the builders rejected, has become
 the corner stone'?"

was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel" (v. 1).
 This probably means that in Lk's view the priests and scribes challenge
 the authority of Jesus as regards his whole ministry in teaching and
 preaching in the temple, and not exclusively as regards the cleansing
 of the temple as narrated in Mt and Mk.

20, 2: *By what authority:* see Mt 21, 23 n.

20, 4: See Mt 21, 25 n.

20, 9-19: See par Mt 21, 33-46.

20, 9: *Parable:* really an allegory. See Mt 21, 33 n for the cast.

20, 14: See Mk 12, 7 n.

20, 17: See Acts 4, 11 n.

18 "Everyone who falls upon that stone will be broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

19 And the chief priests and the Scribes sought to lay hands on him that very hour, but they feared the people; for they knew that he had aimed this parable at them.

20 *Tribute to Caesar* So watching their opportunity, they sent forth spies, who should pretend to be just men, that they might trap him in his talk and deliver him up to the ruling
21 power and to the authority of the procurator. And they asked him, saying, "Master, we know that thou speakest and teachest rightly, and showest no favor to any, but teachest
22 the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to
23 Caesar, or not?" But knowing their craftiness, he said to
24 them, "Why do you test me? | Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it bear?" Answering they said,
25 "Caesar's." And he said to them, "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things
26 that are God's." And they could not take hold of what he said before the people; and marvelling at his answer, they kept silence.

27 *The Sadducees and the Resurrection* Now there came to him certain of the Sadducees, who say that there is no
28 resurrection, and they questioned him, | saying, "Master, Moses has written for us: 'If a man's brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother shall take the widow
29 and raise up issue to his brother.' Now there were seven
30 brothers. And the first took a wife and died childless. | And
31 the next took her and he also died childless. Then the third took her; and in like manner all seven, and they died with-
32.33 out leaving children. Last of all the woman also died. At the resurrection, therefore, of which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her as wife."

20, 20-26: For par see Mt 22, 15-22 n. Mt and Mk speak of Pharisees and Herodians who question Jesus, but Lk speaks of spies sent by the chief priests and scribes.

20, 20: *Deliver him* . . . *procurator*: Lk in contrast with Mt and Mk, says explicitly why the trap was set for Jesus.

20, 24-25: See Mt 22, 20-21 n.

20, 27-40: See par Mt 22, 23-33.

20, 27-33: See Mt 22, 25-28 n.

20, 28: See the levirate marriage in Dt 25, 5-10.

34 And Jesus said to them, "The children of this world
 35 marry and are given in marriage. But those who shall be
 accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection
 36 from the dead, neither marry nor take wives. For neither
 shall they be able to die any more, for they are equal to
 the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resur-
 37 rection. But that the dead rise, even Moses showed in
 the passage about the Bush, when he calls the Lord the
 God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of
 38 Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the
 living, for all live to him."

39 And certain of the Scribes answered and said, "Master,
 40 thou hast said well." And they did not dare to question
 him any further.

41 *The Son of David* But he said to them, "How do they say
 42 that the Christ is the Son of David? | For David himself
 says in the Book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord:
 43 Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool.'
 44 David therefore calls him 'Lord'; how then, is he his son?"

45 *Hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees* And in the
 46 hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, "Beware of
 the Scribes, who like to walk about in long robes, and love
 greetings in the market place, and front seats in the syna-
 47 gogues and first places at suppers; | who devour the houses of
 the widows, making pretense of long prayers. These shall re-
 ceive a heavier sentence."

21

1 *The Widow's Mite* But looking up he saw the rich who
 2 were putting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also
 a certain poor widow putting in two mites. And he said,

20, 34-36: The evangelist's phrasing of Christ's answer is different from Mk's.

20, 37-38: See Mt 22, 31-32 n.

20, 41-44: See par Mt 22, 41-46.

20, 41: See Mt 22, 46 n.

20, 42: *David himself says in the Book of Psalms*: see Mt 22, 44 n.

20, 44: See Mt 22, 45 n.

20, 45-47: See par Mt 23, 6-7.

21, 1-4: See par Mk 12, 41-44. Lk resumes here his theme of the self-sufficient rulers versus the outcasts.

21, 1: *Treasury*: see Mk 12, 41 n.

21, 2: *Two mites*: see Mk 12, 42 n.

3 "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than
4 all. For all these out of their abundance have put in as
gifts to God; but she out of her want has put in all that
she had to live on."

5 *Destruction of Jerusalem and End of the World* And
as some were saying of the temple that it was adorned with
6 beautiful stones and offerings, he said, "As for these things
that you behold, the days will come in which there will not
be left one stone upon another that will not be thrown
7 down." And they asked him, saying, "Master, when are
these things to happen, and what will be the sign when
these things will begin to come to pass?"
8 And he said, "Take care not to be led astray. For many
will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The time
9 is at hand.' Do not, therefore, go after them. But when you
hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; these
things must first come to pass, but the end will not be at
10 once." Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against
11 nation, and kingdom against kingdom; | and there will be
great earthquakes in various places, and pestilences and
famines, and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.
12 "But before all these things they will arrest you and
persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and
prisons, dragging you before kings and governors for
13 my name's sake. It shall lead to your bearing witness.
14 Resolve therefore in your hearts not to meditate before-
15 hand how you are to make your defense. For I myself will
give you utterance and wisdom, which all your adversaries
16 will not be able to resist or gainsay. But you will be
delivered up by your parents and brothers and relatives and
17 friends; and some of you they will put to death. | And
18 you will be hated by all for my name's sake; yet not a hair
19 of your head shall perish. By your patience you will win
your souls.

20 *Destruction of Jerusalem* "And when you see Jerusalem
being surrounded by an army, then know that her desolation
21 is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the

21, 4: *She . . . put in all . . . to live on*: see Mk 12, 44 n.

21, 5-36: For par see Mt 24—25 n.

21, 7: See Mt 24, 3 n.

21, 9: See Mt 24, 6-7 n.

21, 12-18: See Mt 10, 17-22 n.

21, 13: It will lead you to testify to your faith.

mountains; and let those who are in her midst go out, and
 22 let those who are in the country not enter her. For these
 are days of vengeance, that all things that are written may
 23 be fulfilled. But woe to those who are with child, or have
 infants at the breast in those days! For there will be great
 24 distress over the land, and wrath upon this people. And
 they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led
 away as captives to all the nations. And Jerusalem will be
 trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the nations
 be fulfilled.

25 *The Signs of the Last Day* "And there will be signs in
 the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress
 of nations bewildered by the roaring of sea and waves;
 26 | men fainting for fear and for expectation of the things
 that are coming on the world; for the powers of heaven will
 27 be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming
 28 upon a cloud with great power and majesty. But when
 these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up
 your heads, because your redemption is at hand."

29 *Jerusalem's Impending Destruction* And he spoke to them
 30 a parable. "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees. When they
 now put forth their buds, you know that summer is near.
 31 Even so, when you see these things coming to pass, know that
 32 the kingdom of God is near. Amen I say to you, this
 generation will not pass away till all things have been
 33 accomplished. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my
 words will not pass away.

34 *The Need of Watchfulness* "But take heed to yourselves,
 lest your hearts be overburdened with self-indulgence and

21, 24: *And Jerusalem . . . until the times of the nation be fulfilled*: the period signified here extends from 70 A.D. till the end of the world. It equates the "forty-two months" (see Ap 11, 1-2 n.).

21, 25-28: For par see Mt 24, 29-31 n.

21, 26: Men will faint with fear in anticipation of the things that are to happen on earth. *Powers*: stars and planets.

21, 27: *They*: men. For par see Mk 13, 26 n.

21, 28: *Look up*: stand up.

21, 29-33: For par see Mt 24, 32-35 n.

21, 30: *When they now put forth their buds*: when they are budding. In Palestine the fig tree is one of the first to bud forth.

21, 33: See Mt 24, 35 n.

21, 34-36: These verses (especially if v. 36 is compared with Mt 24, 42), refer more probably to the end of the world.

21, 34-35: *That day . . . as a snare*: catastrophe will overtake you as unexpectedly as a trap ensnares an unwary bird.

drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come
 35 upon you suddenly | as a snare. For come it will upon all
 36 who dwell on the face of all the earth. Watch, then, praying
 at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all
 these things that are to be, and to stand before the Son
 of Man."

37 Now in the daytime he was teaching in the temple;
 but as for the nights, he would go out and pass them on the
 38 mountain called Olivet. And all the people came to him
 early in the morning in the temple, to hear him.

II. THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

I. THE LAST SUPPER

22

¹ *The Council and the Betrayal* Now the Feast of the
 Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was draw-
 2 ing near; and the chief priests and the Scribes were seeking
 how they might put him to death, for they feared the people.
 3 But Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one
 4 of the Twelve. And he went away and discussed with the
 chief priests and the captains, how he might betray him to
 5 them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.
 6 He accordingly promised, and sought out an opportunity
 to betray him without a disturbance.

21, 38: Notice the contrast between the attitude of the people and
 the plotting of the priests and scribes (22, 2).

22, 1-2: See par Mt 26, 1-5.

22, 1: The paschal lambs were slaughtered on the afternoon of
 the fourteenth of Nisan, but they were eaten during the Passover
 feast that began on the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, but since
 sunset marked the beginning of a new day according to Jewish
 reckoning, it was the fifteenth of Nisan (March-April). In New
 Testament times the two feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread
 (or Matzoth) were so closely associated that one was named to
 designate the other as in this text. See Ex 11, 1—13, 16 n.

22, 3-6: See par Mt 26, 14-16.

22, 3: *Satan*: in Browning's *The Lost Leader*, Judas is called "one
 more devil's triumph." See 4, 13 n. Scholars speculate on this pos-
 sibility: it was not only avarice which motivated Judas to betray our
 Lord, but also disappointment and despair because he doubted that
 Jesus would ever become a political Messiah.

7 Preparation Now the day of the Unleavened Bread came, on which the passover had to be sacrificed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare for us the passover that we may eat it." But they said, "Where dost thou want us to prepare it?" And he said to them, "Behold, on your entering the city, there will meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house into which he goes. And you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Master says to thee, "Where is the guest chamber, that I may eat the passover there with my disciples?"' And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready." And they went, and found just as he had told them; and they prepared the passover.

14 The Holy Eucharist And when the hour had come, he reclined at table, and the twelve apostles with him. | And

22, 7-13: See par Mt 26, 17-19.

22, 7: See 22, 1 n. The first three Gospels place the Last Supper on Thursday night (Mt 26, 17; Mk 14, 12). Consequently, the solemnity of the Passover on Friday would be broken by the trial before the Sanhedrin, Christ's death, and burial. However, scholars agree that the prescriptions of the Passover made allowances for such events. See Jn 18, 28 n on this controversy.

22, 10-12: According to many moderns, the evangelist does not mean here that Jesus used his supernatural knowledge, but that he had previously made arrangements with the houseowner. It was customary for pilgrims to ask a Jerusalem houseowner for the loan of a room to celebrate the passover meal.

22, 12: *Upper room*: see Acts 1, 13 n. The Greek word is translated in the Vg (Latin Bible) as "*coenaculum*" ("dining room"), whence comes our English word "cenacle."

22, 13: *They prepared the passover*: by roasting the paschal lamb and obtaining the wine, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread.

22, 14: *Reclined*: the Hellenistic custom of reclining, instead of sitting, was not peculiar to the paschal meal but was often used for any festive meal.

22, 15-18: These verses describe actions that precede the words of institution of the Eucharist (vv. 19-20). Vv. 15-18 (corresponding with Mt 26, 29 and Mk 14, 25) contain the eschatological announcement of Jesus, i.e.: this is the last passover meal he will celebrate with his apostles until they meet him in the new kingdom of heaven, depicted as a banquet (Mt 8, 11). Since at the beginning of the Jewish passover meal there was a blessing for the feast (for the lamb) and another for the wine pronounced over the first cup, it is preferable to follow Lk's account which places this eschatological announcement before the institution of the Eucharist rather than after the institution of the Eucharist, as Mt 26, 29 and Mk 14, 25 do. Jesus will no longer eat the "passover" (in Greek, "*pascha*," the lamb); he will no longer drink this wine (v. 18). A less probable

- he said to them, "I have greatly desired to eat this passover
 16 with you before I suffer; | for I say to you that I will eat of
 it no more, until it has been fulfilled in the kingdom of
 17 God." And having taken a cup, he gave thanks and said,
 18 "Take this and share it among you; | for I say to you that
 I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom
 of God comes."
 19 And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke, and
 gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is being

opinion claims that Lk 22, 16 and 18 refer to the establishment of the kingdom after the resurrection when Jesus will eat with the apostles, e.g., at Emmaus (Lk 24, 30).

22, 16: The meaning is the same as explained in 22, 18 n.

22, 18: *Fruit of the vine*: wine. A symbol of eternal life. Jesus does not mean that he will drink the Eucharistic wine in heaven. He means that it is the last passover meal until he will enjoy eternal life with them in the kingdom of heaven.

22, 19-20: For par see Mt 26, 26-29 n. Many textual critics have unsuccessfully tried to show that part of v. 19, beginning with the words "which is being given," and the entire v. 20 do not belong to the original text.

22, 19: *This is my body*: see Mt 26, 26 n. *Which is being given*: generally, biblicists today do not agree with the grammatical argument which considers the use of this Greek present participle by Jesus as an indication that his sacrifice is taking place at the Last Supper. Had Jesus—so it is argued—meant to indicate that his sacrifice would take place in the future, the next day, he would have used the future participle. The argument is fragile because the future participle has hardly ever been used in the New Testament Greek, whereas the present participle is often used to refer to a future imminent action. In addition, modern biblicists show that the Last Supper was in its entirety a prophecy-in-action. When Jesus broke the bread and took the cup of wine he symbolized his sacrificial death on the cross. Hence, it was not the broken bread nor the cup of wine in themselves that symbolized the sacrificial death of Jesus, but the meaning he attached to these actions. *Do this in remembrance of me*: just as the Jews repeated the passover to commemorate God's liberation of their forefathers from Egypt, so the apostles were to commemorate our Lord's liberation of man from sin. When the Jews at the time of Christ celebrated the passover, they did not only think of God's saving act of the past, but of God acting again to save them in a very real, though new way. It is in this real sense that Christ says, "do this in remembrance of me." In contrast with the Lucan-Pauline tradition (see 1 Cor 11, 24), Mt and Mk omit the command of Jesus, "do this in remembrance of me." This omission may be explained thus: in the churches, from which Mt's and Mk's liturgical accounts came, this command was most probably not verbally repeated but was simply obeyed. Even if it were true, as some scholars maintain, that this command originated with the early Christians and not with Christ, the command would still express an understanding in conformity with the mind of Christ.

20 given for- you; do this in remembrance of me." In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, "The cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you.

21 *The Betrayer* "But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man indeed goes his way, as it has been determined; yet woe to that man by whom he will be betrayed." And they began to inquire among themselves which of them it might be that was about to do this.

24 *Contention among the Apostles* Now there arose also a dispute among them, which of them was reputed to be the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they who exercise authority over them are called Benefactors. | But not so with you. On the contrary, let him who is greatest among you become as the youngest, and him who is the chief as the servant. For which is the greater, he who reclines at table, or he who serves? Is it not he who reclines? But I am in your midst as

22, 20: *This cup is the new covenant*: the parallels in Mt and Mk read: "This is my blood of the new covenant." Lk mentions the cup in place of its contents, the blood of Christ, to represent the new alliance. Regarding "the new covenant," see Mt 26, 28 n and Jer 31, 33 n. *For you*: in contrast with the parallel phrase in Mt and Mk "for many," the phrase "for you" seems directed to an audience and thus reveals its liturgical origin.

22, 21-23: For par see Mt 26, 20-25 n. Mt and Mk place the account of the betrayer before the institution of the Holy Eucharist, whereas Lk places it after.

22, 24-27: The important members of Christian society (e.g., the apostles) must follow Christ's example of service as shown throughout his ministry on earth (v. 27b). Compare Mk 10, 42-45. They will thereby use their influence in a different way than the earthly kings use theirs. According to another opinion, perhaps equally probable, vv. 24-27 refer to a dispute about places at table during the Last Supper. V. 27, according to this opinion, would be a clear allusion to the washing of the apostles' feet by Jesus (Jn 13, 2-17). If the latter opinion is true, the position of vv. 24-27 in this section is better accounted for.

22, 24: Almost the same verse opens a different dispute in 9, 46.

22, 25: *Lord it over them*: a clearer translation may be: "lord it over their peoples." *Benefactors*: the kings who oppress their peoples like to be called "benefactors." (The Greek word was popular in the Hellenistic world of the evangelist's day.)

22, 26: *Youngest*: they were the least important and served the older members.

28 he who serves. But you are they who have continued with
 29 me in my trials. And I appoint to you a kingdom, even as
 30 my Father has appointed to me, that you may eat and
 drink at my table in my kingdom; and you shall sit upon
 thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

31 **Peter's Denials Predicted** And the Lord said, "Simon, Si-
 mon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift
 32 you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may
 not fail; and do thou, when once thou has turned again,
 33 strengthen thy brethren." But he said to him, "Lord, with
 34 thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" But he
 said, "I tell thee, Peter, a cock will not crow this day, until
 thou hast denied three times that thou knowest me."

35 And he said to them, | "When I sent you forth without
 36 purse or wallet or sandals, did you lack anything?" And
 they said, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "But now, let
 him who has a purse take it, and likewise a wallet; and let
 37 him who has no sword sell his tunic and buy one. For I
 say to you that this which is written must yet be fulfilled in
 me, 'And he was reckoned among the wicked.'"

22, 28-30: As a reward for their loyalty to him during his public ministry, Jesus will give them an important part in his heavenly kingdom, portrayed as a banquet according to popular imagery (Lk 14, 15).

22, 30: *Judging the twelve tribes*: for the different opinions, see Mt 19, 28 n.

22, 31-34: For par see Mt 26, 30-35 n.

22, 31: *Sift you as wheat*: Satan will violently shake Peter's faith in Jesus. Satan will carry his war against Jesus through an attack on his apostles. See 4, 13 n.

22, 32: The failure of the apostles' faith in Christ and the failure of Peter in his denial of Christ is explained by some as a momentary loss of faith in Christ as the Messiah, and by others as only an apparent loss. Nevertheless, Jesus does not address Peter as if Peter were more in danger than the other apostles. Our Lord thinks of the future. Peter will encourage the other apostles once he will have returned to a solid faith in Christ after Pentecost.

22, 34: See Mk 14, 30 n. *This day*: since it is close to midnight as Jesus speaks, the day has begun with the preceding sunset, according to Jewish reckoning.

22, 35-38: The passage is difficult to understand, for it seems to be composed of separate sayings that Lk assembled here.

22, 35-37: The peaceful times of no worries are over (v. 35 refers to 4, 3). Now that the times of hate and inhospitality are here, the apostles will (symbolically) need a sword (v. 36). Why? Because they will henceforth share in the lot of Jesus who must now fulfill the prophecy about the suffering servant. It is the only time that Jesus proclaims himself the suffering servant by citing Is 53, 12 (v. 37). See Mt 20, 17-19 n.

- 38 "For that which concerns me is at its end." | And they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." And he said to them, "Enough."

II. THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS

- 39 *The Agony in the Garden* And he came out and went, according to his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed him. But when he was at the place, he said to them, "Pray, that you may not enter into temptation." 40 And he himself withdrew from them about a stone's throw, 41 and kneeling down, he began to pray, | saying, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will 42 but thine be done." And there appeared to him an angel 43 from heaven to strengthen him. And falling into an agony he prayed the more earnestly. 44 And his sweat became as drops of blood running down 45 upon the ground. And rising from prayer he came to the 46 disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, that you may not enter into temptation."
- 47 *Jesus Arrested* And while he was yet speaking, behold, a crowd came; and he who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was going before them, and he drew near to Jesus

22, 38: The apostles misunderstood Jesus by interpreting his words (in v. 36) literally. He ends his discourse because the misunderstanding is "enough."

22, 40-46: See par Mt 26, 36-46.

22, 42: Compare, "Our wills are ours, to make them thine," from *In Memoriam* by Tennyson. *Father*: see Mt 26, 39b n.

22, 43-44: Although these two verses are missing in some important Greek manuscripts, textual critics judge that they belong to the original text. See Mt 26, 37-39 n.

22, 43: *Angel . . . to strengthen*: it remains unclear why God sent an angel and in what this strengthening consisted (see Mt 1, 20 n).

22, 44: Medical science has verified with certitude that this rare occurrence, called haemathidrosis, happens due to intense physical weakness and mental anguish. Two results of this phenomenon are: a profound drop in physical resistance, and a heightened skin sensitivity throughout the whole body. (These results furnished part of the explanation why Christ died so soon. Mk 15, 44.) Most modern commentators do not believe that Christ's sweat was miraculous.

22, 45: The evangelist omits the two other incidents of Christ's return to the apostles, which Mt and Mk relate. Luke also omits Christ's reprimand of Peter (Mk 14, 37).

22, 47-53: See par Mt 26, 47-56.

48 to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49 But when they who were about him saw what would follow, they said to him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"

50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and

51 cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, "Bear with them thus far." And he touched his ear and healed him.

52 But Jesus said to the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, who had come against him, "As against a robber

53 have you come out, with swords and clubs. When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

54 *Peter's Denial* Now having seized him, they led him away to the high priest's house; but Peter was following at a dis-

55 tance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and were seated together, Peter was in their midst.

56 But a certain maidservant saw him sitting at the blaze, and after gazing upon him she said, "This man too was with him."

57 But he denied him, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." |

58 And after a little while someone else saw him and said, "Thou, too, art one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am

59 not." | And about an hour later another insisted, saying, "Surely this man, too, was with him, for he also is a Galili-

60 lean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what thou sayest."

And at that moment, while he was yet speaking, a cock

61 crowed. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, "Be-

fore a cock crows, thou wilt deny me three times." And Pe-

ter went out and wept bitterly.

63 *Jesus before the Sanhedrin* And the men who had him
64 in custody began to mock him and beat him. And they

22, 49: *But when . . . would follow*: a clearer translation may be: "But when the companions of Jesus realized what was to happen."

22, 51: *Bear with them*: with those who came to arrest him. The Greek phrase lends itself to various translations.

22, 52: *Chief priests*: see 4, 13 n.

22, 56-62: For par on the discrepancies see Mk 14, 66-72 n.

22, 61: *The Lord turned and looked upon Peter*: a detail, peculiar to Lk's account, indicates that Jesus and Peter were in the same courtyard. *Before a cock . . . three times*: a reference to the prediction related in v. 34. For discrepancies see Mk 14, 30 n.

22, 63-65: See par Mt 26, 67-68. Lk's account of the mockery of Jesus by the "men who had him in custody" (v. 63) seems

- blindfolded him, and kept striking his face and asking him
 65 saying, "Prophecy, who is it that struck thee?" And many
 other things they kept saying against him, reviling him.
 66 And as soon as day broke, the elders of the people and the
 chief priests and Scribes gathered together; and they led him
 away into their Sanhedrin, saying, "If thou art the Christ,
 67 tell us." And he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not
 68 believe me; | and if I question you, you will not answer me,
 69 or let me go. But henceforth, the Son of Man will be seated
 at the right hand of the power of God."
 70 And they all said, "Art thou, then, the Son of God?" He
 71 answered, "You yourselves say that I am." | And they said,
 "What further need have we of witness? For we have heard
 it ourselves from his own mouth."

23

- ¹ *Jesus before Pilate* And the whole assemblage rose, and
² took him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, say-
 ing, "We have found this man perverting our nation, and
 forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that

historically more likely than what the other evangelists narrate. Mt places the mockery scene at the session before the Sanhedrin. According to Mk (14, 65) the offenders were the temple police and some who were at the meeting of the Sanhedrin.

22, 66-71: For par on the chronological sequence of events see Mt 26, 57-68 n. Lk seems more correct in placing the Sanhedrin trial in the morning as against Mt and Mk who place it at night. Differently from the narrations of the first two evangelists, the accounts of Lk and Jn hardly resemble a court trial. There are no witnesses who testify, there is no final dramatic declaration of blasphemy, and no sentence. These two accounts, in contrast with those of Mt and Mk, resemble more a preliminary hearing for the trial before Pilate. The description of the Sanhedrin trial in all four accounts is best described as hasty.

22, 68: *Or let me go*: not in the Greek.

22, 69: See Mt 26, 64 n. Lk omits Mt's and Mk's "you shall see" and their reference to Daniel ("coming upon [or with] the clouds of heaven").

22, 70: *Son of God*: the best opinion is: this title does not mean the divine Son of God, but the title is in apposition to the Messiah of v. 66. See Mt 26, 63-64 n.

22, 71: See Mt 26, 65 n.

23, 1: *Pilate*: see Mk 15, 1 n.

23, 2-5: For par see Mt 27, 11-26 n.

23, 2: The first two accusations are minor; the third, concerning the Messiah-King, is major. (See Jn 19, 12 n.) For an accusation of a purely religious nature see "Son of God" (Jn 19, 7 n).

3 he is Christ a king." | So Pilate asked him, saying, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" And he answered him and said, 4 "Thou sayest it." And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."

5 But they persisted, saying, "He is stirring up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee 6 even to this place." But Pilate, hearing Galilee, asked whether 7 the man was a Galilean. And learning that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him back to Herod, who likewise was in Jerusalem in those days.

8 *Jesus before Herod* Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had been a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard so much about him, and he was 9 hoping to see some miracle done by him. Now he put many questions to him, but he made him no answer.

10 Now the chief priests and Scribes were standing by, vehemently accusing him. But Herod, with his soldiery, treated him with contempt and mocked him, arraying him in a 11 bright robe, and sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends that very day; whereas previously they had been at enmity with each other.

13 *Jesus again before Pilate* And Pilate called together the 14 chief priests and the rulers and the people, | and said to them, "You have brought before me this man, as one who perverts the people; and behold, I upon examining him in your presence have found no guilt in this man as touching 15 those things of which you accuse him. Neither has Herod; for I sent you back to him, and behold, nothing deserving of

23, 3: *Thou sayest it*: see Mt 27, 11 n.

23, 5: This accusation seems to equate the "perverting our nation" in v. 2.

23, 8: See 9, 9 n.

23, 8-12: Even the most radical form critics uphold the historical occurrence of this event.

23, 11: Because of this scene Lk does not narrate the scourging and crowning as do the other three Gospels. A minority group believes that the flagellation, mentioned in the other three Gospels, historically took place here. However, see Mk 15, 15 n.

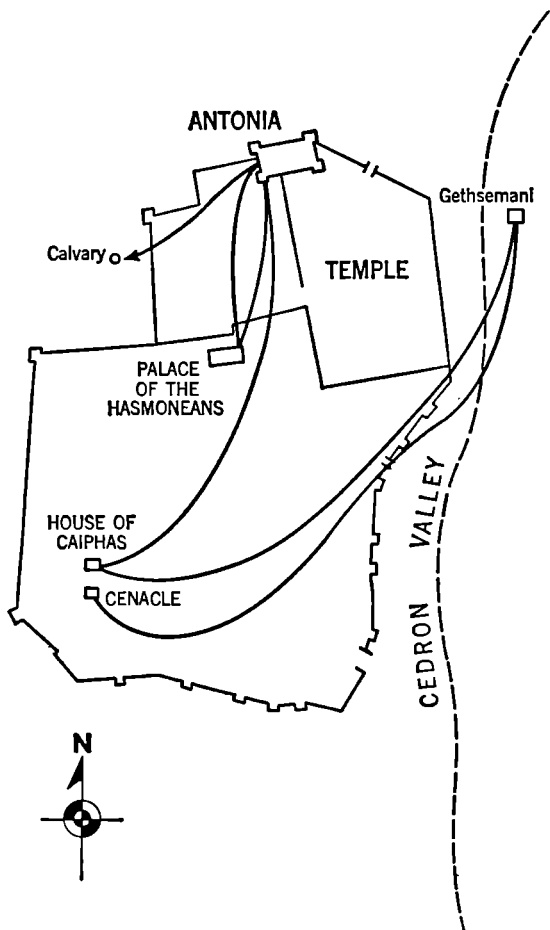
23, 12: The only biblical allusion which indicates the mutual hostility between Pilate and Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee is in Lk 13, 1. Pilate's troops may have executed some of Herod's subjects in the temple.

23, 13-25: For par see Mt 27, 11-26 n.

23, 14: *Perverts the people*: see 23, 5 n.

23, 15: *I sent you back to him*: the more correct Greek reads: "He sent him back to us."

Jesus: From the Cenacle to Calvary



- 16 death has been committed by him. I will therefore chastise him and release him."
- 17 Now at festival time it was necessary for him to release
 18 to them one prisoner. But the whole mob cried out together, saying, "Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas!"
 19 — | one who had been thrown into prison for a certain riot
 20 that had occurred in the city, and for murder. But Pilate
 21 spoke to them again, wishing to release Jesus. But they kept
 22 shouting, saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" And he said to them a third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I find no crime deserving of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and release him."
- 23 But they persisted with loud cries, demanding that he
 24 should be crucified; and their cries prevailed. And Pilate pronounced sentence that what they asked for should be done.
 25 So he released to them him who for murder and riot had been put in prison, for whom they were asking; but Jesus he delivered to their will.

26 *The Way of the Cross* And as they led him away, they laid hold of a certain Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and upon him they laid the cross to bear it after

23, 17: See Jn 18, 39 n on this custom.

23, 19: See Mt 27, 16 n.

23, 22: *A third time*: Pilate declares the innocence of Jesus three times. See vv. 4 and 13-16.

23, 25: *Jesus he delivered to their will*: see Jn 19, 16 n.

23, 26-34: See par Mt 27, 32-38.

23, 26: *Simon*: he may have been a Gentile or a Jew who came to Jerusalem from his country place or farm to celebrate the passover. Nothing indicates that he was a follower of Jesus, nor in sympathy with him. *Cyrene*: capital city of Cyrenaica on the northern coast of Africa. From the fourth century to the time of Christ and after, there were many Greek-speaking Jews in Cyrene. Lucius of Cyrene is mentioned in Acts 13, 1 and so are the Cyrenians, in Acts 2, 10 and 6, 9. *To bear it after Jesus*: only found in Lk. Because it was the Roman custom to have the condemned person carry not the entire cross, but the crossbeam or horizontal bar ("patibulum"), many believe that this is what Jesus was carrying and Simon was carrying it "behind" Jesus (see 23, 33 n). The procession, which was a Roman method of terrifying potential criminals, was headed by the soldiers, then Jesus was preceded by someone who carried a piece of wood covered with white gypsum on which the crime was written in black letters. Lastly came Simon carrying the crossbeam. It is disputed whether the crossbeam was tied on the two outstretched arms (according to Roman custom) or carried on one shoulder. Jn 21, 18f is an argument in favor of the former.

27 Jesus. Now there was following him a great crowd of the people, and of women, who were bewailing and lamenting him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, days are coming in which men will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if in the case of green wood they do these things, what is to happen in the case of the dry?" Now there were also two other malefactors led to execution with him.

33 *The Crucifixion* And when they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, and the robbers, one on his right hand and the other on his left. | And Jesus said,

23, 27: Specialists agree that there is no biblical evidence of the Veronica incident on the way to Calvary. The Veronica account is the result of a legend—older than the Gospel writings—according to which one of the women, called Veronica, wiped Christ's face with her veil, on which the image of his face remained imprinted. The specialists also agree that the Veronica veil (see table "Relics of the Passion," p. 405) is not authentic, nor is there any historical proof that Veronica ever existed. See Mt 9, 20 n for a partial explanation.

23, 28-30: Scholars of esteem either admit that they do not know what Christ alludes to, or they say that he refers to the sorrows to be experienced in consequence of being rejected. Some see an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, but this opinion is not well supported.

23, 29-30: Those "days" will be so horrible that people will regret to have borne children whom they will not be able to nurse (v. 29). They will ask to be buried by the mountains, as the Samaritans did when threatened by the Assyrians, according to the quotation from Os 10, 8 (v. 30).

23, 31: There were several contemporaneous Jewish parallels to this proverb. Authors agree that it forebodes some great future misfortune. They also agree that the green wood represents Jesus and the dry wood most probably represents the Jewish people, but beyond this there are many conjectural meanings, one of which is: If I have to suffer so much, imagine how much the guilty will have to suffer.

23, 33: *Skull*: for the meaning and site see Mk 15, 22 n. *They crucified him there*: since Jesus carried the crossbeam (see 23, 26 n), it would mean that it was joined to the vertical beam at the place of execution. The placing of the title above the head of Jesus suggests that the cross was shaped according to the Roman (Latin) style (+) and not according to the tau cross (T).

23, 34: The first of the "seven last words of Christ." Some important Greek manuscripts omit this saying. Yet many critics retain it since they believe it was omitted, among other reasons, because of this difficulty: how could Christ say that the "rulers" did not know what they were doing when they carefully plotted his execution? They must have been aware of their deed of executing a Messiah and

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Now in dividing his garments, they cast lots.

35 And the people stood looking on; and the rulers with them kept sneering at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ, the chosen one of God." And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him 36 common wine, | and saying, "If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself!"

38 And there was also an inscription written over him in Greek and Latin and Hebrew letters, "This is the King of the Jews."

39 Now one of those robbers who were hanged was abusing him, saying, "If thou art the Christ, save thyself and us!"

40 But the other in answer rebuked him and said, "Dost not even thou fear God, seeing that thou art under the same

41 sentence? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what our deeds deserved; but this man has done nothing wrong."

42 And he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

44 *The Death of Jesus* It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the curtain of the temple was

to such a degree of guilt that Christ interceded for them. But it is inadmissible to say that they knowingly committed deicide. See Acts 3, 15 n. *Dividing his garments*: see Jn 19, 23-24 n. *They cast lots*: see Mk 15, 24 n.

23, 35-37: See par Mt 27, 39-44.

23, 35: *The Christ, the chosen one of God*: a more accurate Greek reading is: "the Messia (or anointed) of God, the chosen one."

23, 36: *Common wine*: see Mt 27, 48 n.

23, 38: See Jn 19, 19-22 and annotations.

23, 40: The "good" thief is called Dismas in the apocryphal gospels. The general sense of the "good" thief's reprimand is that his partner ought to have at least the fear of God since he is also about to die, for he is under the same death sentence as Jesus.

23, 42: If we may judge according to the typical Jewish ideas of the day, the thief believed that God would resurrect the human Messia who would establish a kingdom more political than spiritual.

23, 43: *This day . . . with me . . . in paradise*: the best solution to the enigmatic second word of the seven last words of Christ apparently is that the thief will be in paradise *by being with Jesus* ("to be with me in paradise"). The paradise begins "this day" in the sense that heaven is effectively opened this day with Christ's death.

23, 44-49: See par Mt 27, 45-56.

23, 44: *Sixth hour*: noon. *Darkness*: see Mt 27, 45 n. *The whole land*: Jerusalem. *Ninth hour*: about 3:00 P.M.

23, 45: *Curtain of the temple*: see Mt 27, 51 n.

- 46 torn in the middle. And Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And having said this, he expired.
- 47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Truly this was a just man." | And all the crowd that collected for the sight, when they beheld what things had happened, began to return beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, and the women who had followed him from Galilee, were standing at a distance looking on.
- 50 **The Burial** And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a councillor, a good and just man— | he had not been party to their plan of action—of Arimathea, a town of Judea, who was himself looking for the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took him down, and wrapped him in a linen cloth, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever yet been laid. And it was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was drawing on. And the women who had come with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they went back and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath they rested, in accordance with the commandment.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

24

- 1 **The Women at the Grave** But on the first day of the week at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices
2 that they had prepared, | and they found the stone rolled

23, 46: The last of the seven last words is peculiar to Luke. (Compare T. Dubois' *Oratorio*, "The Seven Last Words," sung in Latin.) Lk interprets the afflicted man, who (see Ps 30, 6) commends himself to God's care, as our Lord who voluntarily offers his human life to God the Father.

23, 47: See Mk 15, 39 n.

23, 50-56: See par Mt 27, 57-61.

23, 50: *A councillor*: a member of the Sanhedrin.

23, 51: *Arimathea, a town of Judea*: the exact site is unknown, but the majority opinion places it northwest of Jerusalem and close to the border of Samaria. All four Gospels mention Arimathea once, but only in the context of the burial.

23, 54: *Preparation Day . . . Sabbath*: see Mk 15, 42 n.

24, 1-11: See par Mt 28, 1-10.

24, 1: *Spices*: see Mk 16, 1 n.

24, 2: The angel rolled the stone away according to Mt 28, 2.

- 3 back from the tomb. But on entering, they did not find the
 4 body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they
 were wondering what to make of this, that, behold, two men
 5 stood by them in dazzling raiment. And when the women
 were struck with fear and bowed their faces to the ground,
 they said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among
 6 the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he
 7 spoke to you while he was yet in Galilee, | saying that the
 Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men,
 and be crucified, and on the third day rise."
- 8.9 And they remembered his words. And having returned
 from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven,
 10 and to all the rest. Now, it was Mary Magdalene and Jo-
 anna and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women
 who were with them, who were telling these things to the
 11 apostles. But this tale seemed to them to be nonsense, and
 they did not believe the women.
- 12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down,
 he saw the linen cloths laid there; and he went away won-
 dering to himself at what had come to pass.

13 *Emmaus* And behold, two of them were going that very

24, 4: The women saw "two men" standing; in Mk 16, 5 it reads: the women saw "a young man sitting"; Jn 20, 11 has Mary Magdalene see "two angels." These are only some of the inconsistencies about the narrative of the grave and of Christ's appearances. Conservatives try to harmonize all discrepancies by explaining that the women visited the tomb in different groups at different hours and, therefore, reported different words and scenes. The opinion of many modern Catholics, on the contrary, ascribes these differences to orally transmitted traditions and thereby underscore the validity of the eyewitnesses' reports from which they ultimately derive.

24, 6: *He is not here, but has risen:* some Greek manuscripts omit this sentence.

24, 7: The prophecy is referred to as having guaranteed its fulfillment. *The Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men:* see the prophecy in 9, 44: "the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men." *And be crucified, and on the third day rise:* see the prophecy in 9, 22: "and be put to death, and on the third day rise again."

24, 10: In Mk the women do not say anything to anyone, but see Mk 16, 8 n.

24, 12: See par Jn 20, 3-10.

24, 13: *Two of them:* two disciples, not two of the twelve apostles. *Sixty stadia:* the modern Qubeibeh ("Emmaus") is about seven miles ("sixty stadia") northwest of Jerusalem. A less probable opinion follows some Greek manuscripts which read "one hundred and sixty stadia." This would refer to a place about twenty miles west of Jerusalem. According to this reading, Emmaus would be modern Amwas.

14 day to a village named Emmaus, which is sixty stadia from Jerusalem. And they were talking to each other about these things that had happened. And it came to pass, while they were conversing and arguing together, that Jesus himself also drew near and went along with them; but their eyes were held, that they should not recognize him. And he said to them, "What words are these that you are exchanging as you walk and are sad?"

18 But one of them, named Cleophas, answered and said to him, "Art thou the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?"

And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be sentenced to death, and crucified him. But we were hoping that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, today is the third day since these things came to pass. And moreover, certain women of our company, who were at the tomb before it was light, astounded us, and not finding his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he is alive. So some of our company went to the tomb, and found it even as the women had said, but him they did not see."

25 But he said to them, "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into his glory?" And beginning then with Moses and with all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to himself.

28 And they drew near to the village to which they were going, and he acted as though he were going on. And they

24, 16: This may be an allusion to a privilege granted to a glorified body to prevent itself from being recognized.

24, 18: There are many scholarly speculations on the identity of the disciple who accompanied Cleophas.

24, 21: Because of his death the disciples did not rank Christ essentially higher than any Old Testament prophet. He was not, according to them, the human temporal Messiah. *The third day*: since a part of a day counted for a day, according to Jewish reckoning, the "third day" corresponded to our Easter Sunday. Perhaps behind this remark there loomed the Jewish notion of the times that the "soul" left the body after the third day, and since decomposition began on the fourth day there was no more hope of a return to life.

24, 22-24: See vv. 1-12.

urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting towards evening, and the day is now far spent." And he went in with them. And it came to pass when he reclined at table with them, that he took the bread and blessed and broke and began handing it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to each other, "Was not our heart burning within us while he was speaking on the road and explaining to us the Scriptures?"

And rising up that very hour, they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven gathered together and those who were with them, | saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." And they themselves began to relate what had happened on the journey, and how they recognized him in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus Appears to the Eleven Now while they were talking of these things, Jesus stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace to you! It is I, do not be afraid." But they were startled and panic-stricken, and thought that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you disturbed, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and feet, that it is I myself. Feel me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." And having said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. But as they still disbelieved and marvelled for joy, he said, "Have you anything

24, 30: It is disputed whether this verse in conjunction with the expression "the breaking of the bread" (v. 35) means that Jesus celebrated the Eucharist or a Jewish meal. Those who claim a Eucharistic celebration face this most serious objection: how could the two disciples recognize Jesus by his breaking of the bread since they had not been with him at the Last Supper? Those who hold for the celebration of a Jewish repast argue: as each person had his own way of "breaking bread" at table, the disciples may have "recognized" Christ's manner of breaking bread at ordinary Jewish meals.

24, 33: *That very hour*: the biblical writers use "hour" as westerners use "minutes."

24, 34: *Has risen*: in Greek, "has been risen," by God. *Appeared to Simon*: Paul (1 Cor 15, 5) confirms the tradition of the Lord's appearance to Peter.

24, 35: *The breaking of bread*: see 24, 30 n. Some scholars hold that Lk's historical narrative conveys this theological meaning: the Old Testament testifies to a resurrected Jesus, but the Eucharist gives the resurrected Jesus to believers.

24, 36: *And said to them, "Peace to you!"*: textual critics retain these words, although some manuscripts omit them. *It is I, do not be afraid*: not in the Greek text.

24, 39-40: See Jn 20, 25 n on the nailing of Christ to the cross.

42 here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of broiled fish
43 and a honeycomb. And when he had eaten in their presence
he took what remained and gave it to them.

44 *The Last Instructions of Jesus* And he said to them
"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was ye
with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are writter
in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms con
45 cerning me." Then he opened their minds, that they might
46 understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, "Thus it is
written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise
47 again from the dead on the third day; | and that repentance
and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all
48 the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. And you yourselves
49 are witnesses of these things. And I send forth upon you the
promise of my Father. But wait here in the city, until you
are clothed with power from on high."

24, 42-43: *And a honeycomb . . . gave it to them*: delete and read: "which he took and ate in their presence."

24, 44-53: There is no chronological link intended between vv. 36-43 and 44-53.

24, 44: *I spoke to you*: one of several references is in 18, 31-33. *Law of Moses*: the first five books of the Old Testament. *The Prophets*: Jos; Jgs; 1, 2 Sm; 3, 4 Kgs; Is. *The Psalms*: the last books of the Old Testament. After the evangelist's time, the Old Testament was divided into the Law, Prophets, and Writings.

24, 45-47: The repeated assertions made in the Passion narratives that the Old Testament prophesied what was to befall the Messiah were not understood until after the events that occurred in Christ's life. The Old Testament Messianic texts in themselves were ambiguous.

24, 46: *Rise again*: see Mk 8, 31 n.

24, 46-47: This summary on the meaning of the Old Testament and of Jesus the Messiah forms the nucleus of Gospel preaching (*kerygma*).

24, 47-49: This section is Lk's equivalent to the command of Christ contained in Mt 28, 19f.

24, 48: *Of these things*: of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

24, 49: *The promise of my Father*: the Holy Spirit. See Acts 1, 4. *Wait . . . until you are clothed with power*: see Acts 1, 8. *In the city*: Lk records that the risen Christ appeared only in Judea, but the three other evangelists mention his appearances in Galilee. All the accounts in the Gospels of Christ's appearances put together are difficult to reconcile with the five listed in 1 Cor 15, 5-7. The Passion narrative was a continuous unit because the Christians had to explain the ignoble death of Jesus. To recount disconnected scenes of the arrest, the flagellation, and all else, would not have been convincing. On the other hand, there was no need for such a continuous narrative on the appearances of the risen Christ from the tomb to the ascension. Just different testimonies concerning his appearances sufficed. *From on high*: a circumlocution for "from God."

IV. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

⁵⁰ *The Ascension* Now he led them out towards Bethany, and
⁵¹ he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass
 as he blessed them, that he parted from them and was car-
⁵² ried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned
⁵³ to Jerusalem with great joy. And they were continually in the
 temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

24, 50-53: The evangelist apparently has the resurrection and the ascension occur on Easter Sunday because all the events narrated in ch. 24 seem to be happening on the same day. The women find the empty tomb on "the first day of the week" (v. 1); the two disciples go to Emmaus "on that very day" (v. 13), and returned "that very hour" (v. 33); Jesus appears to the eleven and their group "now while they were talking" (v. 36); he delivers his last instructions (v. 44); and finally ascends into heaven (v. 51). Some Catholic scholars explain that Lk grouped these events as he found them, without intending a strict twenty-four hour chronology. Others say: by the time Lk wrote Acts 1, 3, he had learned that there was an interval of forty days between the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus. Vv. 50-53 describe an "historical" ascension as contrasted with a "theological" ascension. For this distinction see Acts 1, 9-11 n.

24, 50: *Bethany*: this village is situated on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. See Acts 1, 12.

24, 51: The footprint shown to pilgrims in the small mosque on Mount Olivet is not authentic, but dates from the Mohammedan era. *And was carried up into heaven*: textual critics dispute whether these words come from the original text. If they do, Lk does not necessarily mean that heaven is above the earth, but he uses the words as a convenient expression to convey the idea that Christ was leaving our corrupted world to enter into a divine world.

24, 52: *Worshipped him, and*: textual critics dispute whether these words have come from the original text. If they have, "worshipped" only means: paid homage.

24, 53: *Amen*: not in the Greek text.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

INTRODUCTION

Approximately from 170 A.D. on, tradition has ruled in favor of John the brother of James and son of Zebedee as the author of the fourth Gospel. This identification of the person of the evangelist is corroborated by a reading of the Gospel itself. The author's signature is apparent therein, although he keeps silent about his name, mentioning himself only as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (13, 23). Two more times he mentions himself in this way (19, 26; 20, 2) but then he almost breaks his silence when he says (21, 20), "the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who, at the supper, had leaned back upon his breast. . . ." (Other examples will be singled out in the annotations.) Among non-Catholics there are only a few who hold that John wrote the fourth Gospel.

From the time of Irenaeus in the late second century, Ephesus (in present-day western Turkey) has been indicated as the place where John wrote his Gospel. The date of writing is commonly conceded to have been the late nineties of the first century A.D., even by scholars who previously supported a second century date.

The place and date of the writing cannot be pinpointed because the Gospel was written in different places and at different times. See 4, 1—7, 24 n concerning the question of the arrangement of these chapters by John's disciples. See also 21, 1-25 n concerning the writing of this chapter by disciples of John.

The fourth Gospel was written after the synoptic (the first three) Gospels and, therefore, this question was inevitable: Does it depend on the synoptics for information? What prompts this query is not so much the later date of John's writing as his omission of certain synoptic material (e.g., the baptism of Jesus). In contrast to the omissions is the greater precision he shows in other matters. One of the most far-reaching precisions is John's description of the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem in comparison with the synoptics' accounts, which concern themselves almost exclusively with Christ's ministry in Galilee. If we had only the synoptics we would most likely believe that Jesus spent almost all the time of his ministry around Galilee and came to Jerusalem only for his passion and death. Through John's greater precision we also perceive that the ministry of Jesus did not last one year, as the synoptics seem to imply, but at least two years.

The problem of John's dependence on the synoptics is called by scholars the Johannine Question. A thorough comparison between John's Gospel and the synoptics made the scholars in general conclude: although the fourth evangelist knew the facts as given by

the synoptics, he did not depend on them. One of the main reasons for this conclusion is the strongly personal manner in which John treats topics and events which are also narrated in the synoptic Gospels (e.g., the cleansing of the temple). Since John knew the facts (that the synoptics also narrated) through some other channel, he is rightly regarded by scholars, mostly Catholic, as an independent source of knowledge about Jesus and the early Church, and not as a supplement to the synoptics. However, in spite of the historical reliability of the synoptics and of John's Gospel, there is no way of synchronizing the events and discourses recounted in these two traditions.

Before entering into discussion on the historical value of the fourth Gospel, a most absorbing preliminary study must be made of the Gospel's literary and cultural milieu. The pertinent question may be phrased this way: From what writings and from what culture did John draw the raw ideas to weave them into this inspired masterpiece? The judgment of scholars does not settle on any specific milieu but on a whole complex of settings. It is more exact to say that John's literary and cultural background was Palestinian. This background comprises such variety of currents as the Old Testament, the various types of Hellenism, and heterodox Judaic sects. Two specific minor currents of this Palestinian background are of the greatest relevance: ideas embodied in the Dead Sea Scrolls, a bequest made by the Qumranites, and ideas found in the recently discovered Coptic manuscripts, a bequest made by some Gnostics.

There is widespread agreement among experts of all denominations who are working on the Dead Sea Scrolls to the effect that John (plus the other New Testament writers) and the Qumranites absorbed their ideas from a common, though multi-faceted, Palestinian background. We mention John in particular, because he resembles the Qumranites more than any other New Testament writer. The similarities of ideas and expressions (e.g., light vs. darkness) found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in the New Testament, do not signify that ideas and expressions in the New Testament were borrowed from orally transmitted or written Qumran traditions. Neither John nor Jesus were familiar with the Dead Sea Scrolls in their oral or written forms. At least there is not enough evidence to establish even as much as a probable dependence. Moreover, it cannot be shown that John developed ideas taken from Qumran, nor is it exact to say that the New Testament writers and the Qumranites independently borrowed phrases and ideas from the Old Testament and developed them independently. The geographical area of Palestine and the time span (the third to the first century, B.C.) are too restrictive for such independent currents. The most fitting explanation, upon minute examination of the New Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and all the other contemporary extrabiblical writings, is that the similarities found in the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls derive from a common climate of religious thought in Palestine. To return to the light-and-darkness antithesis: this is not an idea from the Old Testament that has become subjected to an independent treatment in the

New Testament and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The idea comes from the broader background of Palestinian culture in which the antithesis has been used and known by other religious groups as well.

The foregoing presentation allows the conclusion that Christ's teachings are original. In spite of the similarity of expressions there is nothing that mars such unique truths as the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity, the real Presence in the Eucharist, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ.

The other specific minor, but pertinent Palestinian current that belongs to the background of John's Gospel is a brand of Gnosticism. Many scholars have, until very recently, thought that the similarities of words and ideas found in John's and in some Gnostic writings indicated the borrowing of Gnostic material by John. Forty Gnostic treatises were discovered (about 1947) near the village of Chenoboskion in the district of Nag Hammadi in Egypt. These treatises, written in the Coptic language in the third or fourth century A.D., were translated from Greek manuscripts which themselves must have been written between the years 100 and 150 A.D. Even though we are only at the initial stage of reading and translating the Coptic treatises, there is already abundant proof that the Gnostics borrowed from John to parody Christian teaching, and not that John borrowed from them.

The overall view of the Palestinian background invites a discussion on the historical value of John's Gospel. Everything that was said about the reliability of the synoptic Gospels as historical documents applies to John's Gospel also. (See Introduction to the Gospels.) John's way of writing history is less factual than that of the first three evangelists. John does not present the facts for the sake of facts. He writes more subtly, more theologically; he uses history as a basis, but a solid, necessary basis, for his theological teaching. See 2, 3-5 n. In the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, e.g., John teaches through this miracle (history) the symbolism of the living bread of the Holy Eucharist (theology). In his portrayal of Christ's personality, John depicts the historical Christ through symbolism (the Spouse, 3, 29; the Good Shepherd, 10, 11; the true vine, 15, 1ff), but it is symbolism, not allegory devoid of history. It is a symbolism rooted in historical facts and meant to express the sense of history. Hence, it would be unfair to John's intention to deny the historical nature of the facts (e.g., the multiplication of loaves), only because of the symbolic meaning he imparts to them (the proclamation of the Holy Eucharist). It would show a lack of appreciation if we thought Christ less historical because John highlights the spiritual dimension of Christ as the spouse of the Church. Some of the major doctrines offered by John in the wrappings of symbolism but securely established on the foundations of history are: the incarnation; faith; redemption; the Church.

The plan which John follows is difficult to discern. Is his plan geographical, chronological, logical, dramatic, thematic, or liturgical? All theories advanced have each in turn clarified different aspects

concerning the Gospel, and so far no agreement has been reached among scholars.

As to the general purpose of John's Gospel there is no dispute. He himself proclaims the purpose in 20, 31. It is the same as that of the synoptics, namely: to deepen the faith of the Christians in Christ as the divine Messiah. What is disputed, and still remains an open question, is the specific purpose of the Gospel. Some see in it a polemic against the unbelieving Jews or several heretical sects.

John's Greek style does not stand up favorably in comparison with the other writings of the New Testament authors. Not only is his vocabulary far more limited than that of the synoptics, his expressions are also limited in variety. His brief but heavy sentences characterize his style as does his peculiar spiral motion that consists in repetitions with a refrain to a previous point to which he makes some addition. This enlarging circular movement occurs frequently. See 8, 38-44. All in all, his is the simplest Greek, but it is in this very simplicity of John's Gospel that some experts appreciate an unrivaled majesty.

Some principal characteristics of the Gospel of John are: statements of misunderstanding (see 3, 4 n); discourses by Jesus ending with John's reflections (see 3, 13 n); statements with a twofold literal meaning (see 4, 13-14 n); and statements of irony (see 7, 35 n).

Main divisions of the Gospel according to St. John are:

1. Prologue, 1, 1-18
2. The Public Ministry of Jesus, 1, 19—12, 50
3. The Last Supper, 13—17
4. The Passion, Death, and Resurrection, 18—21

PROLOGUE

1

- ¹ *The Word in Himself* In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.
^{2,3} He was in the beginning with God. All things were made
through him, and without him was made nothing that has
⁴ been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
⁵ And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness
grasped it not.
-

1, 1-18: The prologue sings of the Word (*Logos*, in Greek) who existed before the creation of the world, during creation, and who is operating actively among creatures. The movement of the prologue is often described as cyclical: it begins with heaven (vv. 1-2), descends to earth (vv. 12-13), and returns to heaven (v. 18). Recent studies show that some parts of the prologue came from a hymn of the Incarnate Word. One main argument for this theory is the underlying Semitic (not Greek) poetic rhythm; another point is that vv. 6-8 and 15 interrupt the logical and rhythmic unity. It seems better to consider these verses as later additions to the central hymn. Ephesus and Palestine have been suggested as the origin of this hymn.

1, 1: Jn does not begin his account of Jesus the Word (*Logos*) with our Lord's appearance on earth, but with his dwelling in heaven with the Father ("in the beginning") before the creation of the world.

1, 3-4: *That has been made. In him was life*: many textual critics prefer the reading: "that which has been made was life in him." The phrase "that which has been made" does not refer to creation ("without him was made nothing," v. 3) but to men, so that the sense is: the people who were created found life in him.

1, 3: The *Logos* was the mediator through whom everything outside of God was created. The evangelist does not say in what manner the *Logos* operated as the mediator. *Without him was made nothing*: also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

1, 4: The life in the *Logos* is the life he gave to men when he became incarnated. The life of the *Logos* is eternal life according to 5, 26. The life that the Word was giving to men (v. 9) is here described as "the light of men." Otherwise stated, the Word was to give eternal life from God to men under the aspect of *light*. These are two of the most characteristic words of Jn's Gospel. Life and light are important in the account of creation in Genesis. The fact that Jn uses these two words, which were found in religious and philosophical Hellenistic writings of his day, shows that he did not think his readers would misunderstand him.

1, 5: According to some modern interpreters, "the light shines in the darkness" refers to the light of the Word before the incarnation. The present tense (the light *shines*) is used from the viewpoint of the evangelist. One explanation of this difficult v. 5 is: the "light" stands for the Incarnate Word; the "darkness" stands for men. *The darkness grasped it not*: the sense is not: men ("darkness") did not attain Christ through reason, but: men did not attain Christ through faith.

6 *The Word's Mission* There was a man, one sent from
 7 God, whose name was John. This man came as a witness,
 to bear witness concerning the light, that all might believe
 8 through him. He was not himself the light, but was to bear
 9 witness to the light. It was the true light that enlightens
 10 every man who comes into the world. He was in the world,
 and the world was made through him, and the world knew
 11 him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him
 12 not. But to as many as received him he gave the power of
 becoming sons of God; to those who believe in his name:
 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,
 nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 *The Word Incarnate* And the Word was made flesh, and
 dwelt among us. And we saw his glory—glory as of the
 only-begotten of the Father—full of grace and of truth.

1, 6: *John*: John the Baptist.

1, 7: *Witness*: this is one of the most frequent ideas in Jn's Gospel. Testimony to the claims of Jesus is given by the Baptist, the Samaritan woman, the miracles of Jesus, the Old Testament, the crowds, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father. *The light*: the Word Incarnate, Christ.

1, 9-11: Some experts see in these verses a reference to the Incarnate Word, Jesus. A less common view interprets vv. 9-10 as the Word coming into the world through creation and through the Sinai Covenant (v. 11).

1, 12: Not all men rejected Christ.

1, 14: *The Word*: Jn alone uses, but does not explain, *Logos* (in the prologue; in 1 Jn 1, 1; and in Ap 19, 13). There is no satisfactory explanation for the origin of John's use of *Logos* for the Son of God. Some experts point to the *Targumim*, Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament written about 150 A.D. They incorporate traditions that reach back as far as the second century B.C. They speak of "*memra*," meaning word, a circumlocution for the name of God. "*Memra*" meant God, not a personalization of God as God's *Logos*. Another theory of the source of John's idea of the *Logos* is the Old Testament theology of God's Word. The essence of God's "word" is found principally in the personification of wisdom in the Wisdom Books (Wis 18, 15). Many propose a kindred theory. They see the origin of Jn's *Logos* in the speculation on Wisdom in the Old Testament Wisdom Books (Wisdom, Proverbs, Sirach). Wisdom is with God before creation (Prv 8, 22-26); and it participates in creation (Wis 7, 21). According to this theory, Jn in his prologue and St. Paul in some of his letters depend on this Old Testament wisdom for the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, and especially for the doctrine of Christ as mediator in creation (Col 1, 16). But Jn, instead of speaking of the Old Testament "Wisdom," prefers "Word" because the evangelist sees the connection between this "Wisdom" and the way Genesis describes God creating by a mere *word*. Besides, it would not do for Jn to use

- 15 John bore witness concerning him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who is to come after me has been set above me, because he was before me.'" And of his fullness
 16 above me, because he was before me.'" And of his fullness
 17 we have all received, grace for grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus
 18 Christ. | No one has at any time seen God. The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him.

I. THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

1

- 19 *The Witness of John the Baptist* And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him from Jerusalem priests
 20 and Levites to ask him, "Who art thou?" And he acknowledged and did not deny; and he acknowledged, "I am not

"Wisdom" for Jesus because in Greek and in the Semitic languages the word wisdom is of the feminine gender. Therefore, *Logos*, masculine, was preferable. Other scholars reject this theory because it does not explain well enough why Jn chose the designation *Logos*. They favor tracing the roots of Jn's *Logos* idea to the speculation of contemporary Hellenists on an intermediary being between God and man. The scholars exclude Heraclitus, the Stoics, and Philo. This Hellenistic speculation urged Jn to attribute the title *Logos* to Christ. *Dwelt among us*: literally, "he pitched his tent among us." God's glorious presence among the Chosen People in the tent during the wandering in the desert (Ex 40, 34) is replaced by the presence of Jesus. *Full of grace and truth*: this phrase modifies "glory" and corresponds to God's definition of himself as "kindness and fidelity." See Ex 34, 5-8 n. *Truth*: Jn frequently and characteristically uses this word to signify the revelation which Jesus brought and revealed in himself.

1, 15: A duplicate of v. 30.

1, 16: *Grace for grace*: this may mean an abundant flow of grace after grace, or, that the grace of the new covenant replaces the grace of the old covenant.

1, 17: Jesus is the new Moses. *Grace and truth*: see 1, 14 n.

1, 18: Moses never saw God (Ex 33, 18-23); in contrast, the new Moses reveals God to men.

1, 19—2, 11: A common modern opinion holds that Jn distributes the events and dialogues of this section into a seven-day period to symbolize a new creation.

1, 19: *The Jews*: a characteristic word used six times in this Gospel to signify the religious Jewish leaders who oppose Jesus. The use of this title by Jn and other Christian writers at and after the end of the first century underscores the opposition between the Christians and the Jews.

1, 20: To make a negative and positive statement is a Semitic means of emphasis.

- 21 the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias?" And he said, "I am not." "Art thou the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."
- 22 They therefore said to him, "Who art thou? that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What hast thou
- 23 to say of thyself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as said Isaias the prophet."
- 24 And they who had been sent were from among the
- 25 Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him, "Why, then, dost thou baptize, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elias,
- 26 nor the Prophet?" John said to them in answer, "I baptize with water; but in the midst of you there has stood one
- 27 whom you do not know. He it is who is to come after me, who has been set above me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to loose."
- 28 These things took place at Bethany, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
- 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he said, "Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin
- 30 of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me there comes one who has been set above me, because
- 31 he was before me.' | And I did not know him. But that he may be known to Israel, for this reason have I come baptizing with water."
- 32 And John bore witness, saying, "I beheld the spirit

1, 21: *Elias*: see Mt 11, 14 n. *The Prophet*: commentators generally see here an allusion to the prophet promised by Moses to the people. See Dt 18, 15-20 n.

1, 23: See Mt 3, 3 n.

1, 25: *The Christ*: this does not mean Jesus but "the Messiah" who was expected.

1, 26: *There has stood one*: it is better to translate "there is one."

1, 27: *Who has been set above me*: omit.

1, 28: *Bethany, beyond the Jordan*: Not to be confused with Bethany near Jerusalem.

1, 29: *The lamb of God*: according to an explanation frequently given, this figure is a synthesis of the Passover lamb which symbolized deliverance from sin, and the suffering servant (Is ch. 53) who atoned for the sins of others. Therefore, Jesus is the lamb who frees the world from sin but in an atoning manner.

1, 30: *Because he was before me*: because he existed before me in heaven.

1, 32-34: See par Mt 3, 13-17 n. Sometime, somehow, God revealed to the Baptist that the one upon whom the Holy Spirit will descend is the Messiah.

1, 32: It is not clear whether Jn saw the dove in reality or in a vision. (See Mt 3, 16-17 n.)

descending as a dove from heaven, and it abode upon him
 33 | And I did not know him. But he who sent me to baptize
 with water said to me, 'He upon whom thou wilt see the
 Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, he it is who
 34 baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have
 borne witness that this is the Son of God."

35 *The First Disciples* Again the next day John was standing
 36 there, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as
 37 he walked by, he said, "Behold the lamb of God!" And the
 two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.
 38 But Jesus turned round, and seeing them following,
 him, said to them, "What is it you seek?" They said to
 him, "Rabbi (which interpreted means Master), where
 39 dwellest thou?" | He said to them, "Come and see." They
 came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with
 him that day. It was about the tenth hour.
 40 Now Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of
 41 the two who had heard John and had followed him. He
 found first his brother Simon and said to him, "We have
 42 found the Messiah (which interpreted is Christ)." And he

1, 33: *Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit*: better translated, "who
 will baptize with the Holy Spirit." An allusion to Pentecost (as in
 Acts 2, 4; Acts 11, 15-16 and repeatedly thereafter) when Jesus
 will send the Holy Spirit. A vague idea of baptism of the spirit is
 found in "the new spirit" of Ez 36, 26 and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

1, 34: *The Son of God*: some textual critics prefer the reading,
 "The Chosen One of God." For the theological meaning of Christ's
 baptism see Mt 3, 17 n.

1, 35: *The next day John was standing there*: apparently it was the
 day following the Baptist's testimony of Jesus and in the same area
 (see vv. 29-34). *Two of his disciples*: v. 40 names one disciple,
 Andrew. Since the evangelist conceals his identity throughout the
 Gospel, he is the other disciple. Judging from vv. 35-40, it is ex-
 pressly stated that these two disciples left the Baptist to become
 disciples of Jesus.

1, 37: The two disciples understand the Baptist's words as an
 invitation to follow Jesus. The Greek word for "followed" (meaning
 "to follow as a disciple") is used eight more times in this Gospel.

1, 38: *Rabbi*: it is typical of a disciple to address his teacher with
 this distinguished title which is somewhat similar to our "Doctor."
 See Mk 9, 4 n.

1, 39: *Tenth hour*: about 4:00 P.M.

1, 42: It is not clear when Jesus gave the new name Peter to
 Simon. It may have been on this occasion or when he selected the
 twelve (Mk 3, 16 and Lk 6, 14). Moreover, the future tense, "shall
 be called," used in this verse may indicate a promise to give the
 name Peter to the apostle with all its implications as the head of
 Christ's Church. See Mt 16, 18 n.

led him to Jesus. But Jesus, looking upon him, said, "Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas (which interpreted is Peter)."

- 43 The next day he was about to leave for Galilee, and he
 44 found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow me." | Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter.
 45 Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets
 46 wrote, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."
 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold a true Israelite in whom there is no guile!"
 48 Nathanael said to him, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called thee,
 49 when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Nathanael answered him and said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art King of Israel."
 50 Answering, Jesus said to him, "Because I said to thee that I saw thee under the fig tree, thou dost believe. Greater
 51 things than these shalt thou see." And he said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

2

¹ *The Marriage Feast at Cana* And on the third day a

1, 46: *Nazareth*: see Mt 2, 23 n.

1, 49: Nathanael acknowledges the superhuman acumen of Jesus both in knowing his character (v. 47) and in the unexplained event "under the fig tree." See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to the Gospels. *King of Israel*: this was more popularly known as a Messianic title than "Son of God."

1, 50: *Greater things*: an allusion to the future miracles in our Lord's ministry.

1, 51: *Amen, amen, I say to you*: this formula is found twenty times in Jn's Gospel. The synoptics never duplicate "amen." This characteristic New Testament use of "amen" to introduce a pronouncement of solemn importance is obscure in origin. *You shall*: the plural verb shows that Jesus addresses all the disciples present. *Angels of God ascending and descending*: the common denominator of interpretations is to settle for the idea of mediation as the meaning of this verse. The disciples will see Christ act as mediator between God and man. This notion is clearly associated with the allusion to Jacob's ladder (Gn 28, 10-12). Scholars have generally abandoned their attempts to find one incident in the Gospels that would fulfill this saying. Neither do they interpret the angels literally here.

2, 1: *On the third day*: after Jesus called Philip and Nathanael.

- marriage took place at Cana of Galilee, and the mother of
 2.3 Jesus was there. Now Jesus too was invited to the marriage
 and also his disciples. And the wine having run short, the
 4 mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And
 Jesus said to her, "What wouldst thou have me do, woman?
 5 My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the attend-
 ants, "Do whatever he tells you."
 6 Now six stone water-jars were placed there, after the
 Jewish manner of purification, each holding two or three

Cana of Galilee: the hometown of Nathanael (Jn 21, 2) was about five miles northeast of Nazareth.

2, 2: St. Joseph was probably dead, since he is not mentioned. A wedding feast lasted a week, and each day brought new guests.

2, 3-5: The majority opinion goes generally as follows: Mary asks Jesus to perform a miracle. He refuses. He had planned on a later occasion to show himself as the Messiah through a miracle. Yet, because of Mary's intercession, he concedes.

There is no satisfactory explanation concerning all the problems in the scene. The following is one of several modern attempts (Fr. Boismard): Mary's words, "They have no wine," are not intended by her nor interpreted by Jesus as an implied request or a wish for a miracle. She merely observes the embarrassing situation of the lack of wine. The answer of Jesus means that the lack of wine should not disquiet her, but that she should rise above this natural plane to the Messianic plane and ask him for a miracle because "has not my hour come?" The Greek allows the sentence "my hour has not yet come" to be translated as a rhetorical question, inviting the answer, "yes." In other words, Mary should have asked for a miracle because the "hour" to show himself as the Messiah through miraculous signs had arrived. Mary understands and orders the waiters, "Do whatever he tells you." A serious objection to this interpretation is: how was Mary to know that she was supposed to ask for a miracle? The answer lies in the evangelist's symbolic style. He frequently breaks off from an historical narrative to prod his readers onto a theological level. For a clearer example see 3, 13 n. Historically, Jesus never rebuked Mary. This "rebuke" is Jn's symbolic way of telling his readers that the Messianic "hour" of Jesus had arrived through the miracle at Cana (see "hour" in 2, 4 n.).

2, 4: *What wouldst thou have me do*: literally, "what is it to me and to you?" *Woman*: the Greek title, *gunai*, is not found in the Greek Old Testament; it probably came from Hellenistic usage. *Hour*: from many other places in Jn's Gospel (e.g., 7, 30; 8, 20), it is evident that he uses "hour" to mean the "glorious" hour of Christ's redeeming death and of his resurrection and ascension, which gives full meaning to his life and toward which hour his whole life tends. Here at Cana, the miracle only begins that "hour." See 13, 31-32 n.

2, 5: *Do whatever he tells you*: the only words, in these controversial verses, on the meaning of which there is unanimous agreement.

2, 6: Jars of water were customarily available since frequent ceremonial washings were prescribed by Jewish customs (see Mk 7, 3-5). *Two or three measures*: some estimate fifteen to twenty-five gallons.

- 7 measures. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water."
 8 And they filled them to the brim. | And Jesus said to them, "Draw out now, and take to the chief steward." And they took it to him.
 9 Now when the chief steward had tasted the water after it had become wine, not knowing whence it was (though the attendants who had drawn the water knew), the chief
 10 steward called the bridegroom, | and said to him, "Every man at first sets forth the good wine, and when they have drunk freely, then that which is poorer. But thou hast kept the good wine until now."
 11 This first of his signs Jesus worked at Cana of Galilee; and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in
 12 him. After this he went down to Capharnaum, he and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples. And they stayed there but a few days.

13 *Cleansing of the Temple* Now the Passover of the Jews

2, 8: The verse is reminiscent of: "The conscious water saw its God and blushed." Some point to these words of Richard Crashaw as the finest single line of poetry in the English language.

2, 10: In all the books of antiquity such a custom has not yet been found. *Wine*: Scholars differ widely on the symbolism intended here by Jn. Some opinions are: the wine is a symbol of the Eucharistic wine that Jesus will leave to men: the Eucharistic blood that he will spill on the cross. A third opinion holds: it is the wine of doctrine that Christ gives to lead men to the heavenly banquet. A fourth opinion is that the wine symbolizes the Holy Spirit whom Christ will send after his ascension.

2, 11: *Signs*: by his frequent and characteristic use of "signs," the evangelist means not only miraculous signs as proofs of Christ's Messianic claims but symbols of a higher reality, such as God's power (3, 2). In this Gospel, "signs" often give rise to controversy (9, 16). The synoptics often use the word "signs" when Jesus is asked for a sign and refuses to give one. *Cana*: the present-day village of Cana is the same place as the Cana of the Gospel. A church dating back only to the fourth century marks the site of the miracle. *Glory*: the glory of Jesus, the same as God's glory (1, 14) appears in this miracle.

2, 12: *After this*: see 7, 1 n. *Capharnaum*: fifteen hundred feet below Cana. *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers." See Mt 13, 55-56 n.

2, 13-17: See par Mt 21, 12-17 and especially Mk 11, 15-19 n for an explanation of the parallel passage.

2, 13: *Passover*: the second Passover in the public ministry of Jesus is mentioned in 6, 4 (the same as "feast of the Jews" in 5, 1); the third (Passover of the Passion) is mentioned in 11, 55; 12, 1; 13, 1. On the other hand, the synoptic Gospels mention only one Passover.

- 14 was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple men selling oxen, sheep and doves, and
 15 money-changers at their tables. And making a kind of whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, also the sheep and oxen, and he poured out the money of the changers and
 16 overturned the tables. And to them who were selling the doves he said, "Take these things away, and do not make the
 17 house of my Father a house of business." And his disciples remembered that it is written, "The zeal for thy house has eaten me up."
 18 The Jews therefore answered and said to him, "What sign dost thou show us, seeing that thou dost these things?"
 19 In answer Jesus said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in
 20 three days I will raise it up." The Jews therefore said, "Forty-six years has this temple been in building, and wilt
 21 thou raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the
 22 temple of his body. When, accordingly, he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this,

2, 14: *Temple*: although the courtyard of the Gentiles was not considered a true part of the temple, Jesus judged the commerce a profanation of the temple. See Mk 11, 15 n.

2, 15: *Whip*: Jesus improvised here because no one was allowed to carry arms or even staffs into the temple courtyards.

2, 17: *Has eaten me up*: "will consume me" seems preferable according to the Greek. Jn does not quote from Ps 68, 10 to show only that the disciples see in the actions of Jesus his ardent zeal for the temple, but the evangelist also intends an allusion to what Christ's zeal will ultimately lead him to—his death on the cross.

2, 18: *Sign*: see Mt 21, 23 n on temple authority.

2, 21: *But he was speaking of the temple of his body*: the majority opinion explains that "the temple of his body" refers to both members of the phrase ("Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"). Hence, Christ would be predicting his resurrection in this wise: if you kill me, I will arise. One of several objections to the majority opinion is: why did the disciples not understand the factual statement (not the full implications) in this prediction of his resurrection?

Before exposing a minority opinion, it is imperative to recall that the temple symbolized the old law and God's presence among the Chosen People. Now, according to a minority view, the phrase "he was speaking of the temple of his body," refers to the Jerusalem temple of stone ("destroy this temple") and to the temple of Christ's body ("in three days I will raise it up"). The meaning is: if you destroy the stone temple (and with it the symbol of the old law and God's presence) by crucifying me, I will have it continue through the new temple of my body! This was the evangelist's symbolic way of teaching his Christian readers the continuity of the Jewish temple's significance within Christ's glorified body. See Ap 21, 22 n.

2, 22: *He had risen*: literally, "he was raised," by God.

and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

- ²³ Now when he was at Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, many believed in his name, seeing the signs
²⁴ that he was working. But Jesus did not trust himself to
²⁵ them, in that he knew all men, | and because he had no need that anyone should bear witness concerning man, for he himself knew what was in man.

3

- ¹ *Nicodemus* Now there was a certain man among the
² Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus at night, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou hast come a teacher from God, for no one can work these signs that thou workest unless God be with him."
³ | Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?"
⁵ Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot

2, 23: *Many believed in his name*: many, attracted by his miracles, believed in Christ not as being divine, or as the Messiah, but most probably merely as one approved by God.

2, 24: *In that he knew all men*: because he knew them all.

2, 25: A suggested translation: "he did not need anyone to give him evidence about human nature, for he knew what was in man's heart."

3, 1: *Nicodemus*: according to Jn 19, 39, Nicodemus later became a follower of Jesus. *A ruler*: perhaps a member of the Sanhedrin.

3, 2: *Rabbi*: see Mk 9, 4 n. *We*: there are six opinions as to whom this word refers. See 3, 10-11 n.

3, 3: *Again*: the evangelist selects this Greek word (*anōthen*) with an intent to be ambiguous because it can mean "from above" (in the spiritual sense) and it can also mean "a second time" as Nicodemus understands it (v. 4). *The kingdom of God*: this expression, so frequently found in the synoptics, is used in the fourth Gospel only here. Jn prefers to use (eternal) "life."

3, 4: The evangelist frequently has Jesus make statements of misunderstanding. The questioner understands the words of Jesus in a material sense, which is Jn's way of setting the stage for Christ's further teaching. It is not certain whether this technique is original with Jn or whether he follows early Christian teachers.

3, 5: It is commonly taught that this text means the absolute necessity of the Sacrament of Baptism. *Again*: most probably not in the original text.

- 6 enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the
 7 flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do
 not wonder that I said to thee, 'You must be born again.
 8 The wind blows where it will, and thou hearest its sound
 but dost not know where it comes from or where it goes
 So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."
 9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can these
 things be?"
 10 Answering him, Jesus said, "Thou art a teacher in Israel
 11 and dost not know these things? Amen, amen, I say to thee,
 we speak of what we know, and we bear witness to what we
 12 have seen; and our witness you do not receive. If I have
 spoken of earthly things to you, and you do not believe, how
 13 will you believe if I speak to you of heavenly things? And
 no one has ascended into heaven except him who has de-
 scended from heaven: the Son of Man who is in heaven.

3, 6: *Flesh is flesh*: a reference to v. 4. *Spirit is spirit*: a reference to v. 5.

3, 7: *Again*: here it has the spiritual meaning of "from above." See 3, 3 n.

3, 8: *Wind . . . Spirit*: the same Greek word (*pneuma*) is used for "wind" and "Spirit." See Acts 2, 2-3 n. Just as one believes in the wind without understanding how it operates, so must one believe in the Spirit, even though one does not understand its operations. Its "operations" demand that one must be baptized with "water and the Spirit" (v. 5) to be saved.

3, 10-11: Jn contrasts Nicodemus, probably as representing the Jews (see v. 2, "we"), with Christ, representing the Christians.

3, 11: *We speak . . . we have seen*: a reference to v. 5. *Our witness you do not receive*: the "you" probably refers to the Jews.

3, 12: *Earthly things . . . heavenly things*: one of several probable interpretations is: if you do not understand Christian baptism, how will you understand its ultimate terminus, the ascension? (See 3, 13 n.)

3, 13: *The Son of Man who is in heaven*: textual critics dispute whether this phrase was in the original Greek text. From this verse to v. 21 there is a diversity of opinion on where Christ's discourse with Nicodemus ends and where the evangelist's reflections begin. At the same time, the link between Christ's teaching on baptism and Jn's reflections loses strength. V. 13 may be alluding to the ascension (Acts 1, 10) and, if so, the verse is most probably part of Jn's reflection. This is the first clear example of the problem of the evangelist's discourses (but see 2, 3-5 n). Because of the similarity in style between the discourses of Jesus and the continuation of them by his interlocutor, and because Christ's discourses differ here from his others as narrated by the synoptics, many non-Catholic scholars used to reject the historicity of Christ's speeches as recorded in the fourth Gospel. These discourses were largely considered Jn's own theological reflections. Similar discourses appear in chs. 14-17.

14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even
 15 so must the Son of Man be lifted up, | that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."
 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish,
 17 but may have life everlasting. For God did not send his Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the
 18 world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged; but he who does not believe is already judged, because he does not believe in the name of the only-begotten
 19 Son of God. | Now this is the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet men have loved the darkness
 20 rather than the light, for their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to
 21 the light, that his deeds may not be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God.

22 *The Witness of John the Baptist* After these things Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea, and he stayed
 23 there with them and baptized. Now John was also baptizing in Aennon, near Salim, for there was much water there. And
 24 the people came and were baptized. For John had not yet been put into prison.

3, 14-15: The evangelist, not Christ, says that just as the bronze serpent on a pole cured the people (see Nm 21, 6-9 n), so will Christ crucified save men.

3, 16: *God so loved the world*: compare the *Crucifixion*, an oratorio by John Stainer.

3, 17-21: The evangelist, not Christ, is definitely speaking here. Jn describes salvation as a judgment through the symbols of light and darkness. The mission of Jesus demands that men decide for or against him.

3, 17: *To judge*: to condemn. The same Greek word means both to judge and to condemn.

3, 22-24: Jesus and the Baptist carry on their missions of baptism in the same general area of the Jordan River valley.

3, 22: *Jesus . . . baptized*: the verse reads as if Jesus himself baptized, but see 4, 2. The baptism preached by our Lord (3, 5) was not baptism by the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Sacrament of Baptism, which became current when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit after his resurrection, but the baptism he preached was a preparatory one, very similar to that of the Baptist.

3, 23: *Aennon*: many geographers despair in trying to locate this place. *Near Salim*: one probable opinion places it six miles south of Scythopolis; and another, three miles east of Sichem.

3, 24: If we had nothing but the first three Gospels, we would think that Jesus began his ministry only after the Baptist was imprisoned (see Mt 4, 12; Mk 1, 14).

- 25 Now there arose a discussion about purification between
 26 some of John's disciples and the Jews. And they came to
 John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond
 the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold he
 baptizes and all are coming to him."
 27 John answered and said, "No one can receive anything
 28 unless it is given to him from heaven. You yourselves
 bear me witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ but have
 29 been sent before him.' He who has the bride is the bride-
 groom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and
 hears him, rejoices exceedingly at the voice of the bride-
 30 groom. This my joy, therefore, is made full. | He must in-
 crease, but I must decrease."
 31 He who comes from above is over all. He who is from
 the earth belongs to earth, and of the earth he speaks.
 32 He who comes from heaven is over all. | And he bears
 witness to that which he has seen and heard, and his witness
 33 no one receives. He who receives his witness has set his
 34 seal on this, that God is true. For he whom God has sent
 speaks the words of God, for not by measure does God give
 35 the Spirit. The Father loves the Son, and has given all
 36 things into his hand. He who believes in the Son has ever-
 lasting life; he who is unbelieving towards the Son shall
 not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.

3, 25: *And the Jews*: some textual critics prefer "with a Jew." The use of Jew in the singular conveys the same meaning as the plural. See "Jews" in 1, 19 n. *About purification*: expected by baptism. Perhaps the discussion was about the baptisms preached by the Baptist and Jesus (v. 26).

3, 31-36: Many scholars recently consider these verses to be a meditation of the evangelist. Others believe that these misplaced verses continue the discourse of Jesus (after v. 21).

3, 31: The one "from above" and "from heaven" is Christ. The one "from the earth," according to the majority view, is the Baptist. The evangelist says that the Baptist bows off the scene in favor of Jesus because Christ's horizon of thought goes beyond the world, whereas the Baptist's horizon is limited by earth. There are several other probable explanations of this verse.

3, 32-33: Jesus testifies to what he saw and heard in heaven. The phrase, "No one receives" (the testimony of Jesus) is modified by "He who receives his witness," which means that the people who receive Christ's words receive thereby God's truth.

3, 35: *Has given all things into his hand*: the Father operates through Jesus.

3, 36: *Wrath*: condemnation.

4

- 1** *The Samaritan Woman* When, therefore, Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more
2 disciples than John—| although Jesus himself did not baptize,
3 but his disciples—| he left Judea and went again into Galilee.
4 Now he had to pass through Samaria.
5 He came, accordingly, to a town of Samaria called Sichar,
6 near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, wearied as he was from the journey, was sitting at the well. It was about the
7 sixth hour. There came a Samaritan woman to draw water.
8 Jesus said to her, "Give me to drink"; | for his disciples
9 had gone away into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to him, "How is it that thou, although thou art a Jew, dost ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.
10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is who says to thee, 'Give me to drink,' thou, perhaps, wouldst have asked of him, and
11 he would have given thee living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the
12 well is deep. Whence then hast thou living water? | Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well, and drank from it, himself, and his sons, and his flocks?"
13 In answer Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again. He, however, who drinks of the

4, 1—7, 24: Because Jesus is described as traveling too briskly between Jerusalem and Galilee, scholars dispute whether or not these chapters are in their correct order. Many critics say that the original order was disturbed, but they differ in their explanations. One explanation is that the present order is the work of the evangelist's disciple-editors. See chs. 14—16 n for a similar problem.

4, 5: *Sichar*: an alternate spelling for Sichem. *Near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph*: see Gn 12, 6-7.

4, 6: *Jacob's well*: archeologists agree on identifying the location of this well. It lies beneath a roofless fourteenth century church at the foot of the Samaritans' sacred Mount Garizim. Jacob's well is reminiscent of the narrative on Jacob's purchase of the neighboring land (Gn 33, 18-20). *About the sixth hour*: about noon.

4, 9: On the feud between Jews and Samaritans see the end of "Religious Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament. *A Jew*: see 3, 25 n.

4, 11: *Living water*: an allusion to spring water as contrasted to the less desirable cistern water gathered during rainless months. By having Jesus again misunderstood, the evangelist once more sets the stage for further instruction (see Nicodemus in 3, 4 n).

4, 13-14: To Jesus, "living water" means his revelation about God and his sending of the Holy Spirit. See 7, 37-39. The evangelist

- 14 water that I will give him shall never thirst; | but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain
 15 of water, springing up unto life everlasting." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst, or come here to draw."
 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call thy husband and come here."
 17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "Thou hast said well, 'I have no husband,'
 18 | for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In this thou hast spoken truly."
 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that thou art a
 20 prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that at Jerusalem is the place where one ought to
 21 worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jeru-
 22 salem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salva-
 23 tion is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeks
 24 such to worship him. God is spirit, and they who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

most likely expected his Christian readers not only to understand the historical meaning in Christ's answer, but also that the "living waters" symbolize the water in the Sacrament of Baptism. This text is a characteristic example of the twofold literal meaning in much of Jn's Gospel, comprising an historical and a "Christian" meaning. Some of the examples are 9, 7; 13, 10. Compare the three levels of meaning in the Introduction to the Gospels.

4, 14: *Life everlasting*: see 1, 4 n.

4, 16-18: Jesus uses his infused knowledge that will help the Samaritan woman to believe in him, first as prophet (v. 19), and then as Messia (v. 29). See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to the Gospels.

4, 20-24: Jesus says that a time will come when they will no longer dispute about which mountain has the legitimate temple of worship. The true believers will worship the true Spirit of God the Father ("the Father in Spirit and in truth") who will be the true source of cultic worship because the Spirit alone agrees with God's revelation of himself in the person of Jesus (v. 22). Christ's contrast between a false place of worship and the Holy Spirit as the true source of worship seems a rebuke to the interpretation of these verses as a prediction of an interior spiritual cult without external rites.

4, 20: *You say*: the Jews say.

4, 22: *You worship . . . we*: the Samaritans worship what they do not understand whereas the Jews understand what they worship.

4, 24: *God is spirit*: a Hebraic way of saying: God gives men the Holy Spirit.

- 25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messias is coming
(who is called Christ), and when he comes he will tell us
26 all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak with thee
am he."
- 27 And at this point his disciples came; and they won-
dered that he was speaking with a woman. Yet no one said,
"What dost thou seek?" or, "Why dost thou speak with
28 her?" The woman therefore left her water-jar and went away
29 into the town, and said to the people, | "Come and see a man
who has told me all that I have ever done. Can he be the
30 Christ?" They went forth from the town and came to
31 meet him. Meanwhile, his disciples besought him, saying,
32 "Rabbi, eat." | But he said to them, "I have food to eat
33 of which you do not know." The disciples therefore said
to one another, "Has someone brought him something
to eat?"
- 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of
35 him who sent me, to accomplish his work. Do you not say,
'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?'
Well, I say to you, lift up your eyes and behold that the
36 fields are already white for the harvest. And he who
reaps receives a wage, and gathers fruit unto life everlasting,
37 so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. For
herein is the proverb true. 'One sows, another reaps.'
38 I have sent you to reap that on which you have not labored.
Others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."
- 39 Now many of the Samaritans of that town believed in
him because of the word of the woman who bore witness,
40 "He told me all that I have ever done." | When therefore the
Samaritans had come to him, they besought him to stay
41 there; and he stayed two days. And far more believed

4, 27: It is still typical of some oriental countries that a professional man does not even speak to his wife in public.

4, 35: *Well I say . . . for the harvest*: Christ may be alluding to the salvation of the Samaritans.

4, 36: Jesus "reaps" some of the Samaritans (v. 39). These conversions are his reward ("wage"). He gathers converts ("fruit") who will receive everlasting life. Jesus is both the sower and the reaper of these Samaritan converts.

4, 37-38: Some interpreters believe that these verses allude to the disciples who will harvest in Samaria the fruit ripened there from the preliminary preaching by John the Baptist.

4, 40: See Mt 10, 5 n on the few times Jesus preaches to non-Jews.

42 because of his word. And they said to the woman, "We no longer believe because of what thou hast said, for we have heard for ourselves and we know that this is in truth the Savior of the world."

43 Now after two days he departed from that place and
44 went into Galilee, | for Jesus himself bore witness that a
45 prophet receives no honor in his own country. When, therefore, he had come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem during the feast, for they also had gone to the feast.

46 *The Official's Son* He came again therefore to Cana of Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son was lying sick at Cana of Galilee. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea into Galilee, he went to him and besought him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.
48 Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you see signs and
49 wonders, you do not believe." The royal official said to
50 him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." | Jesus said to him, "Go thy way, thy son lives."

The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and
51 departed. But even as he was now going down, his servants
52 met him and brought word saying that his son lived. He asked of them therefore the hour in which he had got better. And they told him, "Yesterday, at the seventh hour,
53 the fever left him." The father knew then that it was at that very hour in which Jesus had said to him, "Thy son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

4, 42: *The Savior of the world*: the apex of the revelation of Jesus in this episode. God wants to save the world through Jesus (3, 16). The woman saw Christ as a Jew (v. 9); then as one "greater than our father Jacob" (v. 12); a prophet (v. 19); the Messiah (v. 26). Compare the blind man as explained in 9, 38 n.

4, 46-53: Modern biblicists dispute whether this miracle is the same as that of the centurion's son narrated by Mt and Lk. Mt's narrative is closer to Jn's (see Mt 8, 5-13 n). However, those who judge that Jn is relating a distinct miracle do so on the grounds that the differences are too great to be accounted for by oral transmission. Regardless, the miraculous event or events in themselves may insinuate that after the time of Christ's ministry, at the time of the evangelist's writing, more Gentiles than Jews were entering the Church.

4, 48: Jesus may be also addressing the bystanders because the Greek verbs are in the plural.

4, 51: *His son lived*: his son was going to live

4, 52: *At the seventh hour*: about 1:00 P.M.

- 34 This was a second sign that Jesus worked when coming from Judea into Galilee.

2

5

- 1 *The Cure at the Pool of Bethesda* After this there was
 2 a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now
 there is at Jerusalem, by the Sheepgate, a pool called in
 3 Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these were lying
 a great multitude of the sick, blind, lame, and those with
 shrivelled limbs, waiting for the moving of the water.
 4 For an angel of the Lord used to come down at certain times
 into the pool, and the water was troubled. And the first to
 go down into the pool after the troubling of the water was
 cured of whatever infirmity he had.
 5 Now a certain man was there who had been thirty-
 6 eight years under his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying
 there, and knew that he had been in this state a long time,
 7 he said to him, "Dost thou want to get well?" The sick
 man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the
 pool when the water is stirred; for while I am coming,
 8 another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise,
 9 take up thy pallet and walk." And at once the man was
 cured. And he took up his pallet and began to walk. Now
 that day was a Sabbath.
 10 The Jews therefore said to him who had been healed,
 "It is the Sabbath; thou art not allowed to take up thy
 11 pallet." He answered them, "He who made me well said
 12 to me, 'Take up thy pallet and walk.'" They asked him
 then, "Who is the man who said to thee, 'Take up thy
 13 pallet and walk?'" But the man who had been healed did
 not know who it was, for Jesus had quietly gone away, since
 there was a crowd in the place.

5, 1: *A feast of the Jews*: see 2, 13 n.

5, 2: Archeologists have authenticated this passage by their excavation of a rectangular pool with four porticoes on the sides and a central portico dividing the pool into two separate basins.

5, 3-4: *Waiting . . . whatever infirmity he had*: most textual critics delete these words. Even though the Church uses vv. 1-5 precisely because of these unauthentic verses for the feast of the Archangel Raphael (October 24), she no more pronounces herself in favor of their authenticity than of those from the apocryphal fourth book of Esdras used in the Mass of All Souls' Day (November 2).

5, 7: The people attributed the agitation of the water to supernatural power.

5, 10: *To take up thy pallet*: to carry your mat.

14 Afterwards Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, thou art cured. Sin no more, lest something worse befall thee." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

16 And this is why the Jews kept persecuting Jesus, because he did such things on the Sabbath. Jesus, however, answered them, "My Father works even until now, and I work." This, then, is why the Jews were the more anxious to put him to death; because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

19 *Christ's Claim to Divinity* In answer therefore Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever he does, this the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself does. And greater works than these he will show him, that you may wonder. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom he will. For neither does the Father judge any man, but all judgment he has given to the Son, | that all men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent him. "Amen, amen, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has life everlasting, and does not come to judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is here, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live. For as the Father has life in himself, even so he has given to the Son also to have

5, 14: Since Jesus, according to 9, 24, does not believe that infirmities are a sign of sin, his words may be interpreted here as advice to the man that his cure ought to lead him to conversion lest something worse than his former infirmity befall him.

5, 15: *The Jews*: see 1, 19 n.

5, 17-18: The Jews know that God's activity as judge never ceases. They are horrified because Jesus equals his own activity, as in this example of the cure on the Sabbath, with God's activity as judge.

5, 19-23: The Son performs the same two activities as his Father, namely, bestowing spiritual life (v. 21) and judging (v. 22).

5, 20: *Greater works than these*: a reference to the previous cure (vv. 8-9).

5, 24: *To judgment*: to condemnation. *From death to life*: from spiritual death to spiritual life.

5, 25: *The dead*: the spiritually dead. *Shall live*: spiritually.

5, 26: *Life . . . life*: supernatural life (see 1, 4 n).

27 life in himself; | and he has granted him power to render
 28 judgment, because he is Son of Man. Do not wonder at this,
 for the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs
 29 shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they who have
 done good shall come forth unto resurrection of life; but
 they who have done evil unto resurrection of judgment.
 30 | Of myself I can do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my
 judgment is just because I seek not my own will, but the
 will of him who sent me.

31 *Justification of Christ's Claims* "If I bear witness con-
 32 cerning myself, my witness is not true. There is another who
 bears witness concerning me, and I know that the witness
 33 that he bears concerning me is true. You have sent to John,
 34 and he has borne witness to the truth. I however do
 not receive the witness of man, but I say these things
 35 that you may be saved. He was the lamp, burning and shin-
 ing; and you desired to rejoice for a while in his light.
 36 "The witness, however, that I have is greater than that
 of John. For the works which the Father has given me to
 accomplish, these very works that I do, bear witness to
 37 me, that the Father has sent me. And the Father him-
 self, who has sent me, has borne witness to me. But
 38 you have never heard his voice, or seen his face. And
 you have not his word abiding in you, since you do not be-
 39 lieve him whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures,
 because in them you think that you have life everlasting.
 40 And it is they that bear witness to me, † yet you are not
 willing to come to me that you may have life.
 41.42 "I do not receive glory from men. But I know that you
 43 have not the love of God in you. I have come in the name
 of my Father, and you do not receive me. If another come

5, 27: *To render judgment*: to reward and punish. *Son of Man*:
 see Mt 8, 20 n.

5, 28: A reference to the resurrection at the end of the world.

5, 29: *Resurrection of judgment*: the evil ones will be raised up
 to be condemned.

5, 32: *Another*: God the Father.

5, 33-34: The Baptist has testified to the divine Sonship of Jesus.
I say these things that you may be saved: since Jesus has the Father's
 testimony (v. 32) he does not need the testimony of the Baptist, but
 he says these things because men are saved through the Baptist's
 witnessing to Jesus.

5, 35: *Lamp*: a metaphor for an enlightening teacher.

5, 39-40: Many think the Old Testament scriptures sufficient for
 obtaining life everlasting and therefore need not believe in Jesus.

44 in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe who receive glory from one another, and do not seek
 45 the glory which is from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you hope. For if you believed Moses
 46 you would believe me also, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

6

1 *Jesus Feeds Five Thousand* After this Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias.
 2 And there followed him a great crowd, because they witnessed
 3 the signs he worked on those who were sick. Jesus therefore went up the mountain, and sat there with his disciples.
 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.
 5 When, therefore, Jesus had lifted up his eyes and seen that a very great crowd had come to him, he said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"
 6 But he said this to try him, for he himself knew what he would do.
 7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not enough for them, that each one may receive a
 8 little." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon

5, 47: Compare Lk 16, 31 n.

6, 1-15: See Mt 14, 13-21 n and Mk 8, 1-9 n for par accounts on the number of miracles; Mk 6, 34-44 n for the interpretations. Jn's account follows the "statistics" of Mt or Mk's account of the first multiplication.

COMPARATIVE TABLE ON THE MIRACLES OF
MULTIPLICATION

Multiplication	Chapter and Verse	Number of People	Number of Loaves	Number of Fishes	Number of Baskets
First	Mt 14, 13-21	5,000	5	2	5
Second	Mt 15, 32-38	4,000	7	few	7
			7		12
First	Mk 6, 34-44	5,000		2	12
Second	Mk 8, 1-9	4,000	7	few	

6, 4: *Passover*: see 2, 13 n.

6, 7: *Two hundred denarii*: the equivalent of a laborer's wages for two hundred days.

9 Peter, said to him, "There is a young boy here who has five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are these among so many?" Jesus then said, "Make the people recline."

Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore reclined, in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, distributed them to those reclining; and likewise the fishes, as much as they wished. But when they were filled, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments that are left over, lest they be wasted." | They therefore gathered them up; and they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

When the people, therefore, had seen the sign which Jesus had worked, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world." So when Jesus perceived that they would come to take him by force and make him king, he fled again to the mountain, himself alone.

Jesus Walks on the Water Now when evening had come, his disciples went down to the sea. And getting into a boat, they went across the sea towards Capharnaum. And it was already dark, but Jesus had not come to them. Now the sea was rising, because a strong wind was blowing. But after they had rowed some twenty-five or thirty stadia, they beheld Jesus walking upon the sea, and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I, do not be afraid." They desired therefore to take him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land towards which they were going.

6, 9: *Young boy*: there is no historical evidence to support the legend that he became the bishop of Limoges, France.

6, 14-15: In contrast to the synoptic Gospels, Jn mentions the enthusiasm of the crowd on account of the miraculous multiplication. The people hail Jesus as the Messianic prophet and king.

6, 14: See 1, 21 n.

6, 16-21: See par Mk 6, 45-52. Jn's account is more condensed than the parallel narratives of Mt and Mk. The fourth evangelist, for instance, does not describe the hard rowing in the stormy waters.

6, 17: *But Jesus had not come to them*: this phrase apparently should begin, not end, the sentence. The meaning is that the disciples did not see Jesus coming, and they sailed without him for Capharnaum.

6, 19: Ordinarily it took a boat manned by five oarsmen one hour and twenty minutes to row across the lake at its widest expansion, about seven miles. *Twenty-five or thirty stadia*: three to four miles.

6, 21: The text does not explain how the boat, three to four miles out on the lake, was suddenly ashore. According to Mt and Mk,

- 22 *The Discourse on the Eucharist* The next day, the crowd which had remained on the other side of the sea observe that there had been but one boat at that place; and the Jesus had not gone into the boat with his disciples, but
- 23 that his disciples had departed alone. But other boat from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the
- 24 bread, when the Lord gave thanks. When therefore the crowd perceived that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and came to Capharnaum, seeking Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi: when didst thou come here?"
- 26 Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek me, not because you have seen signs, but because you have eaten of the loaves and have been filled
- 27 Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you. For upon him the Father, God himself, has set his seal."
- 28 They said therefore to him, "What are we to do that
- 29 we may perform the works of God?" In answer Jesus said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." They said therefore to him, "What sign, then, dost thou, that we may see and believe thee?"
- 31 What work dost thou perform? | Our fathers ate the manna in the desert, even as it is written, 'Bread from heaven he gave them to eat.'"
- 32 Jesus then said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my

Jesus went aboard and the sea calmed down. Some commentators understand this as a second miracle; others say it is a characteristic example of Jn's method to bypass what happened historically in order to convey a symbolic meaning, e.g., the divine presence of Jesus dispels all fear, "It is I, do not be afraid."

6, 22-24: The general sense of these obscure verses is: Jesus had left the people on the eastern shore of Lake Galilee where the disciples, without Jesus, boarded the one boat that lay there. Jesus disappeared. The people rightly guessed that he must have joined his disciples at Capharnaum. When they found him there, he delivered his discourse.

6, 27: *God . . . set his seal*: of approval, perhaps at the baptism of Jesus.

6, 30-31: It seems that since the people did not judge Christ's miracle of multiplication of the gift of bread more extraordinary than Moses' gift of the manna (Ex 16, 15-16), they demanded a greater sign from Jesus because he made greater claims than Moses.

6, 32-33: Jesus does not answer, because to "prove" overwhelmingly would defeat the attempt to make them *believe* in him.

- 33 Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
- 34 They said therefore to him, "Lord, give us always this bread."
- 35 But Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst. But I have told you that you have seen me and you do not believe. All that the Father gives to me shall come to me, and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Now this is the will of him who sent me, the Father, that I should lose nothing of what he has given me, but that I should raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father who sent me, that whoever beholds the Son, and believes in him, shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day."
- 41 The Jews therefore murmured about him because he had said, "I am the bread that has come down from heaven." And they kept saying, "Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How, then, does he say, 'I have come down from heaven?'"

6, 35-59: Many Catholics divide this discourse on the "Bread of Life" into two parts: vv. 35-50 in which Christ presents himself as the Bread that nourishes forever through its doctrine; and vv. 51-59 which present Christ as the Sacramental Eucharistic Bread.

6, 35: *I am the bread of life*: a Hebraic way of saying, *I give the bread of supernatural life*. The evangelist's characteristic use of "I" in Christ's sayings have the symbolic predicates of light, door, shepherd, resurrection, way-truth-life, vine. The biblical origin of these "I sayings" may be a threefold combination of the formula for God, "I am" (Ex 3, 6); the personified "I" of Wisdom (Prv 8); and the emphatic "but I say to you" in the synoptic Gospels (Mt 5, 44). The synoptic Gospels would say "the kingdom of heaven is like the bread," etc. Hence, for Jn, the person of Jesus equates the "kingdom of God." On the "I sayings" without a predicate, see 8, 24 n.

6, 36: Although Jesus told them that they saw his miracle of multiplication, they do not believe in him (as the Messia).

6, 37-40: This self-contained unit may be summarized in this way: Jesus came to do God's will. It is his will that everyone whom he gave Jesus should receive supernatural life and be resurrected on the last day. Therefore, to the one who believes in him, Jesus will give life and resurrection.

6, 41-42: *The Jews therefore murmured*: they murmured here just as their ancestors murmured against Moses about the manna in the desert (Ex 16, 2).

6, 42: *I have come down from heaven*: an example of an ironical statement. See 7, 35 n.

43 In answer therefore Jesus said to them, "Do not murmur
44 among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father
who sent me draw him, and I will raise him up on the last
45 day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they all shall be
taught of God.'

"Everyone who has listened to the Father, and has learned
46 comes to me; | not that anyone has seen the Father except
47 him who is from God, he has seen the Father. Amen, amen
I say to you, he who believes in me has life everlasting.

48.49 "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in
50 the desert, and have died. This is the bread that comes down
51 from heaven, so that if anyone eat of it he will not die.
52 I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If
anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread
that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

53 The Jews on that account argued with one another
saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

54 Jesus therefore said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to
you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and
55 drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He who
eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting
56 and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is
57 food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats
my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him.
58 As the living Father has sent me, and as I live because of
the Father, so he who eats me, he also shall live because
59 of me. This is the bread that has come down from heaven;
not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eats
this bread shall live forever."

60 These things he said when teaching in the synagogue
at Capharnaum.

61 Many of his disciples therefore, when they heard this,
62 said, "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?" | But
Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were murmuring

6, 45: Paraphrasing Is 54, 13, Jesus replies: what the prophets announced was that God would draw men through inward teaching, and so direct them to him (Jesus).

6, 46: The evangelist clarifies, lest v. 45 be misunderstood, that God's drawing of men does not imply their immediate vision of the Father.

6, 48-59: Jesus offers men his body as a means of participating in the life that he shares with God the Father.

6, 58: Just as the Father, who has life, sent Jesus and he has life because of the Father, so likewise the person who eats Jesus will have life because of him.

- 63 at this, said to them, "Does this scandalize you? What then if
 you should see the Son of Man ascending where he was
 64 before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and
 65 life. But there are some among you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was who should betray him.
- 66 And he said, "This is why I have said to you, 'No one can come to me unless he is enabled to do so by my
 67 Father.'" From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him.
- 68 Jesus therefore said to the Twelve, "Do you also wish
 69 to go away?" Simon Peter therefore answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of everlasting life,
 70 | and we have come to believe and to know that thou art the Christ, the Son of God."
- 71 Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you, the
 72 Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." Now he was speaking of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was, though one of the Twelve, who would betray him.

3

7

- 1 *Jesus Goes Secretly to the Feast of Tabernacles* Now after these things Jesus went about in Galilee, for he did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were seeking to
 2 put him to death. Now the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was
 3 at hand. His brethren therefore said to him, "Leave here and go into Judea that thy disciples also may see the works that thou

6, 63: Jesus points to his future ascension.

6, 64: The Holy Spirit whom Jesus will send after his ascension will give supernatural life in abundance through the Eucharistic body of Jesus. *The flesh profits nothing*: the material bread, e.g., the manna in the desert, will not give supernatural life. *The words . . . are spirit and life*: Christ's doctrine points to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost who, after the ascension of Jesus, will give eternal supernatural life.

6, 70: *The Christ, the Son of God*: in Greek, "The Holy One of God." A title that is equivalent to Messiah.

7, 1: *After these things*: this phrase, used seven more times, and its synonymous phrase, "after this," used four times, are transitional phrases between narratives having no temporal indication. *The Jews*: see 1, 19 n.

7, 2: *Feast of Tabernacles*: this was the most popular of Jewish feasts. See Lv 23, 34 n.

7, 3: *His brethren*: the Greek word *adelphoi* may here, according

- 4 dost; | for no one does a thing in secret if he wants to be publicly known. If thou dost these things, manifest thyself to the world." For not even his brethren believed in him.
- 5 Jesus therefore said to them, "My time has not yet come but your time is always at hand. The world cannot hate you but it hates me because I bear witness concerning it, that its works are evil. As for you, go up to the feast, but I do not go up to this feast, for my time is not yet fulfilled."
- 6 When he had said these things he stayed on in Galilee.
- 7 But as soon as his brethren had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but as it were privately.
- 8 The Jews therefore were looking for him at the feast and were saying, "Where is he?" | And there was much whispered comment among the crowd concerning him. For some were saying, "He is a good man." But others were saying, "No, rather he seduces the crowd." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.
- 9 When, however, the feast was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. And the Jews marvelled, saying, "How does this man come by learning since he has not studied?"
- 10 *The Source of Christ's Teachings* Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not my own, but his who sent me. If anyone desires to do his will, he will know of the teaching whether it is from God, or whether I speak on my own authority. He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory. But he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is truthful, and there is no injustice in him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and none of you observes the Law,

to the context, be interpreted in the wide sense of relatives (see M 13, 55-56 n.).

7, 6: The time for death, resurrection, and ascension has not yet arrived, but they can go to Jerusalem any time since their visit would have no important consequences.

7, 7: *I bear witness concerning it*: I testify against it.

7, 8: *My time is not yet fulfilled*: my time has not yet arrived.

7, 10: One explanation of the apparent contradiction between vv. 8 and 10 is that Jesus refused the worldly advice of his relatives for he had intended to go at the time appointed by his Father (see 7, 6 n.).

7, 15: Jesus, an apparent layman, provoked astonishment, because only those who had studied under a teacher preached in the temple area.

7, 18: His lack of self-interest and his complete dedication to God's glory should be convincing proof that the teaching of Jesus is true. *Injustice*: insincerity.

- 20 Why do you seek to put me to death?" The crowd answered and said, "Thou hast a devil. Who seeks to put thee to death?"
- 21 Jesus answered and said to them, "One work I did and you all wonder. For this reason Moses gave you the circumcision"—not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers—
- 22 "and on a Sabbath you circumcise a man. If a man receives circumcision on a Sabbath, that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you indignant with me because I made a whole man well on a Sabbath? Judge not by appearances but give just judgment."
- 23 *Christ's Origin* Some therefore of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is not this the man they seek to kill? And behold, he speaks openly and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the rulers have really come to know that this is the Christ? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from."
- 24 Jesus therefore, while teaching in the temple, cried out and said, "You both know me, and know where I am from. Yet I have not come of myself, but he is true who has sent me, whom you do not know. I know him because I am from him, and he has sent me."
- 25 They wanted therefore to seize him, but no one laid

7, 20: *Thou hast a devil*: a preferable translation is: "You are mad." In Jn's Gospel there is no mention that Jesus is formally accused of curing through Beelzebub, nor are there any accounts of his exorcisms.

7, 21: *One work*: v. 23 identifies this work as the cure of the man at the pool (5, 1-18). *For this reason*: a better phrasing is: "... you all wonder for this reason. Moses, . . ."

7, 22: Centuries before Moses, Abraham inaugurated circumcision (see Gn 17, 23-27 n).

7, 23: Since the Mosaic Law required that a child be circumcised on the eighth day (Lv 12, 3), all male children born on a Sabbath were circumcised on the following Sabbath, in spite of the Sabbath rest. Therefore Jesus asks (v. 23) why they blame him for curing on the Sabbath?

7, 24: *Judge not by appearance*: do not judge the cure on the Sabbath superficially, according only to the *appearance* of breaking the Mosaic Law of the Sabbath rest.

7, 27: People knew that Jesus came from Nazareth (1, 46). Yet they were puzzled because, according to one current opinion, no one would know where the Messia ("the Christ") was to come from even after he will have become known as the true Messia.

7, 28: *But he is true who has sent me*: a clearer translation may be: "but there is really One (the Father) who sent me."

7, 30: *His hour*: see 2, 4 n.

- 31 hands on him because his hour had not yet come. Many of the people, however, believed in him, and they kept saying, "When the Christ comes will he work more signs than
 32 this man works?" The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering these things about him, and the rulers and Pharisees sent attendants to seize him.
- 33 Jesus then said, "Yet a little while I am with you and
 34 then I go to him who sent me. You will seek me and will not find me; and where I am you cannot come."
- 35 The Jews therefore said among themselves, "Where is he going that we shall not find him? Will he go to those
 36 dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What is this statement that he has made, 'You will seek me and will not find me, and where I am you cannot come?'"
- 37 Now on the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me
 38 and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture says, 'From within him there shall flow rivers of living water.'"
- 39 He said this, however, of the Spirit whom they who believed in him were to receive; for the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- 40 Some of the crowd, therefore, when they had heard
 41 these words, said, "This is truly the Prophet." | Others

7, 31: Jn mentions six times in his Gospel that many believed in Jesus.

7, 32: *Attendants*: the police force of the temple was sent to arrest Jesus.

7, 33: *A little while*: this phrase will be repeated several times. It is part of the evangelist's way of saying that Jesus will not simply die, but he will go to his Father at a time fixed by him.

7, 35: The Jewish leaders wonder whether Jesus will go to teach the Jews who were living among the pagans outside of Palestine as well as the pagans themselves. This may be a characteristic example of Jn's ironical statements. He has the Jewish leaders and others make sarcastic remarks, or at least understatements which are more significant than the speakers realize. In this example, Christ, through his missionaries, would later go to the Jews abroad and to the pagans. Those ironical statements differ from statements of misunderstanding (see 3, 4 n).

7, 38: Recent studies show that the better punctuation in the Greek is as follows: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me; and let him drink who believes in me. As the Scripture says, 'From within him there shall flow rivers of living water.'" From Christ ("him") shall flow the living waters of baptism, from the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost onward till and after Christ's ascension (see v. 39). This is probably the most exact text in scripture to be quoted for the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

7, 40: *The Prophet*: see 1, 21 n.

- 42 said, "This is the Christ." Some, however, said, | "Can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that it is of the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived, that the Christ is to come?"
- 43 So there arose a division among the crowd because of him.
- 44 And some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him.
- 45 The attendants therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and these said to them, "Why have you not brought him?" The attendants answered, "Never has man spoken as this man." The Pharisees then answered them, "Have you also been led astray? | Has any one of the rulers believed in him, or any of the Pharisees? But this crowd, which does not know the Law, is accursed."
- 50 Nicodemus, he who had come to him at night, who was one of them, said to them, "Does our Law judge a man unless it first give him a hearing, and know what he does?"
- 52 They answered and said to him, "Art thou also a Galilean? Search the Scriptures and see that out of Galilee arises no prophet."
- 53 And they returned each one to his own house.

8

- 1 *The Adulteress* But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
- 2 And at daybreak he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him; and sitting down he began to teach them.
- 3 Now the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and setting her in the midst, | said to him, "Mas-

7, 42: Some of the people did not know that Jesus was truly born in Bethlehem and was brought up in Galilee (see Mi 5, 1 n).

7, 43: The controversial aspect of dividing men for and against Jesus because of what he says is brought to the fore in 9, 16 and 39; 10, 19.

7, 50: *Nicodemus*: see 3, 1ff.

7, 52: There is no statement, biblical or otherwise, to the effect that no prophet was to come from Galilee.

7, 53—8, 11: Catholic scholars consider this as a part of the inspired writing, and as a part of the original Greek text of the New Testament. They dispute, however, whether it is by the same author who has written the rest of the Gospel and whether it is in the right place within this Gospel, or whether it belongs to another Gospel, perhaps that of Lk whose style resembles the style of this passage. Several textual critics believe it was placed here because of "I judge no one" in 8, 15.

- 5 ter, this woman has just now been caught in adultery. And in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such persons.
- 6 What, therefore, dost thou say?" | Now they were saying this to test him, in order that they might be able to accuse him. But Jesus, stooping down, began to write with his finger on the ground.
- 7 But when they continued asking him, he raised himself and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." And again stooping down, he began to write on the ground. But hearing this, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest. And Jesus remained alone, with the woman standing in the midst.
- 10 And Jesus, raising himself, said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned thee?" She said, "No one, Lord." Then Jesus said, "Neither will I condemn thee. Go thy way, and from now on sin no more."
- 12 *The Light of the World* Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me does not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." The Pharisees therefore said to him, "Thou bearest witness to thyself. Thy witness is not true."
- 14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness to myself, my witness is true, because I know where I came from and where I go. But you do not know where

8, 5: Lv 20, 10 and Dt 22, 22 legislate the death penalty for both parties if the woman was married. (The manner of death was not specified.) If the man committed adultery with a virgin, the girl was to be stoned (Dt 22, 23f). Several commentators believe that the case described here belongs to the latter category.

8, 6-8: Besides this, there is no other instance recorded in the New Testament that Jesus ever wrote anything. Most scholars do not believe that the writing with his fingers on the ground has any particular significance other than to show his lack of interest in their accusations. Commentators do not follow St. Jerome's opinion that Jesus scribbled the sins of his accusers.

8, 12-59: These verses continue the controversy where ch. 7 left off. Christ's person and authority are contested.

8, 12: *I am the light of the world*: according to more probable opinions, Jesus took the idea of this comparison from the sun or from one of the Old Testament texts ("A light to the nations," see Is 49, 6 n). *The light of life*: Jesus asserts himself as the enlightening revealer of God and savior of all men. "He who follows me" means the believer in Jesus whom he will lead out of the "darkness" of death to "the light of life" (see 1, 8-9).

8, 13: They say: Jesus is witness to his own cause; his testimony cannot be verified.

- 15 I came from or where I go. You judge according to the
 16 flesh; I judge no one. And even if I do judge, my judgment
 is true, because I am not alone, but with me is he who sent
 17 me, the Father. And in your Law it is written that the wit-
 18 ness of two persons is true. It is I who bear witness to my-
 self, and he who sent me, the Father, bears witness to me."
 19 They therefore said to him, "Where is thy father?"
 Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If
 you knew me, you would then know my Father also."
 20 Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, while teaching
 in the temple. And no one seized him, because his hour
 had not yet come.
- 21 *The Son of God* Again, therefore, Jesus said to them, "I
 go, and you will seek me, and in your sin you will die.
 22 Where I go you cannot come." The Jews therefore kept
 saying, "Will he kill himself, since he says, 'Where I go
 you cannot come?'"
 23 And he said to them, "You are from below, I am from
 above. You are of this world, I am not of this world.
 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for
 if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sin."

8, 15: *According to the flesh*: according to worldly standards.

8, 17: A reference to Dt 17, 6.

8, 18: *It is I*: this saying and "I am" in vv. 23-24 and 28 may be classified as an "I saying" but without the symbolic predicate (see 6, 35 n). Jesus is not strictly applying the Mosaic Law which requires two witnesses since the one witness, God the Father, should suffice. See 5, 31-32 for the same two witnesses.

8, 19: Pretending not to understand that Jesus means God the Father, they ask where his father is.

8, 20: *Treasury . . . temple*: since the public was not allowed in the treasury room of the temple, Jesus was probably teaching in the nearby court of the women where men were also allowed. *His hour*: see 2, 4 n.

8, 21: *I go*: to the Father. *And you will seek me*: after his return to the Father through his ascension, they will seek Jesus in the person of another Messiah who will not be able to save men from sin and eternal death.

8, 22: The evangelist may sometimes be using the technique of an ironical statement (see 7, 35 n), or a statement of misunderstanding (see 4, 11 n) or both.

8, 24: These words of Jesus apparently mean: if they refuse culpably to believe in who he is, they will die in sin. *That I am he*: Jesus wants to be believed as the one and only savior sent by God to reveal him. Many experts believe that Christ's repetition of the formula "I am" (8, vv. 18, 23, 28; 13, 19) is the evangelist's allusion to Old Testament texts in which Yahweh with "I am" asserts

25 They therefore said to him, "Who art thou?" Jesus said
 26 to them, "Why do I speak to you at all! I have many
 things to speak and to judge concerning you; but he who
 sent me is true, and the things that I heard from him,
 27 these I speak in the world." And they did not understand
 that he was speaking to them about the Father.

28 Jesus therefore said to them, "When you have lifted
 up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and
 that of myself I do nothing: but that I preach only what
 29 the Father has taught me. And he who sent me is with
 me; he has not left me alone, because I do always the
 30 things that are pleasing to him." When he was speaking
 these things, many believed in him.

31 *The Children of Abraham* Jesus therefore said to the
 Jews who had come to believe in him, "If you abide in my
 32 word, you shall be my disciples indeed, and you shall
 33 know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They
 answered him, "We are the children of Abraham, and we
 have never yet been slaves to anyone. How sayest thou,
 'You shall be free?'"

34 Jesus answered them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, every-
 35 one who commits sin is a slave of sin. But the slave does
 not abide in the house forever; the son abides there forever.
 36 If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free

he is the only God (Is 43, 10f; Dt 32, 39). See the "I sayings" with predicates, e.g., "I am the bread of life" (6, 35 n).

8, 26: *Why do I speak to you at all*: one of several other readings of this phrase is "What I have been telling you from the beginning."

8, 28: *I am he*: see 8, 24 n.

8, 31: Jesus insists on loyalty as a requirement for being his disciples since he knows that the Jews' belief in him is resting only on the enthusiasm of the moment.

8, 32: The freedom will come from adherence to the teaching of Jesus on revelation (see 1, 14 n), by which man will be redeemed from slavery to sin in which he lived since his fall (v. 34). Consequently, freedom here does not mean political, social, nor even philosophical freedom, regardless how philosophical freedom is defined.

8, 33: The Jews do not deny their political subjection to the Romans; but they deny to be in a state of interior subjection to any foreign power. This kind of "spiritual" liberty derives from being descendants of Abraham. See 3, 4 n on statements of misunderstanding.

8, 35-36: One probable explanation of the obscure connection between these two verses is: if you want a permanent abode in the Christian assembly, change from slaves of sin to free sons of God. ("The Son" is Jesus who makes men free just as the Father does because the Son is also *divine*.)

- 37 indeed. | I know that you are the children of Abraham; but you seek to kill me because my word takes no hold among
- 38 you. I speak what I have seen with the Father; and you do what you have seen with your father."
- 39 They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are the children of
- 40 Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill me, one who has spoken the truth to you which I have heard from God. That is not what Abraham
- 41 did. | You are doing the works of your father." They therefore said to him, "We have not been born of fornication; we have one Father, God."
- 42 Jesus therefore said to them, "If God were your Father, you would surely love me. For from God I came forth and have come; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent
- 43 me. | Why do you not understand my speech? Because
- 44 you cannot listen to my word. The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie he speaks from his very nature,
- 45 for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak
- 46 the truth you do not believe me. Which of you can convict me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe
- 47 me? He who is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear is that you are not of God."

8, 37: Jesus admits that they are racially descended from Abraham. The rest of the verse is loosely connected with the preceding part of the verse.

8, 38: A clearer translation may be: "I say in words what I saw in my Father's presence; and you say in action what you learned from your father" (the devil, according to v. 44).

8, 39: *Do the works of Abraham*: see Lk 3, 8 for the Baptist's saying that repentance is more important than physical descent from Abraham.

8, 41: *Your father*: the devil, according to v. 44. *We have not been born of fornication*: this is emphatic in the Greek. The implication is that Jesus was born thus. There is a possible example of the evangelist's irony here in making the critics of Jesus unknowingly refer to his coming from no human agent but from God as stated in 1, 13. *We have one Father, God*: the critics of Jesus now put aside the descent from Abraham and speak of the spiritual descent from God.

8, 42: It is characteristic of the evangelist to emphasize that the mission of Jesus on earth was willed by the Father.

8, 44: *He was a murderer from the beginning*: inasmuch as the devil tempted Adam (Gn ch. 3) so that he lost immortality, the devil can be called a murderer.

8, 46-47: A summary of the preceding arguments of Jesus.

- 48 *Christ and Abraham* The Jews therefore in answer said to him, "Are we not right in saying that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" Jesus answered, "I have not a devil, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks and who judges Amen, amen, I say to you, if anyone keep my word, he will never see death."
- 52 The Jews therefore said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, 'If anyone keep my word he will never taste death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself?'"
- 54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you do not know him, but I know him. And if I say that I do not know him, I shall be like you, a liar. But I know him, and I keep his word. | Abraham your father rejoiced that he was to see my day. He saw it and was glad." The Jews therefore said to him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"
- 58 Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I am." They therefore took up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out from the temple.

8, 48-49: *Hast a devil . . . I have not a devil*: this means: you are mad . . . I am not mad (see 7, 20 n). *A Samaritan*: an insult to a Jew because of the mutual hatred between Samaritans and Jews.

8, 50: The evangelist emphasizes that Jesus came for the glory of his Father. *There is one who seeks*: in Greek, "there is one who seeks it." The Father wants his Son to receive glory (see v. 54).

8, 51: *Amen, amen*: see 1, 51 n. Jesus promises eternal life to those who believe in him.

8, 52: The critics of Jesus understand preservation from physical death.

8, 56: *Abraham . . . rejoiced . . . to see my day . . . was glad*: many modern Catholic commentators understand this verse to refer to Gn 17, 17 wherein Abraham "laughs" (or "rejoices," according to a Jewish interpretation reflected here by Jesus) at God's promise of a son. In the long view, and unknown to Abraham, Jesus was the ultimate cause for the patriarch's rejoicing, for he (Jesus) is Abraham's spiritual son.

8, 58: *I am*: Jesus equates himself with the eternal God (see Ex 3, 14. His critics understood his words as blasphemy and began casting stones (the penalty according to Lv 24, 16).

8, 59: *Jesus hid himself*: not miraculously.

9

- ¹ ***The Man Born Blind*** And as he was passing by, he saw
² a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him,
 "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he
³ should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither has this man
 sinned, nor his parents, but the works of God were to be
⁴ made manifest in him. I must do the works of him who sent
 me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.
⁵ As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world."
⁶ When he had said these things, he spat on the ground
 and made clay with the spittle, and spread the clay over his
⁷ eyes, | and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloe
 (which is interpreted 'sent')." So he went away, and
⁸ washed, and returned seeing. The neighbors therefore and
 they who were wont to see him before as a beggar, began
 saying, "Is not this he who used to sit and beg?" Some
⁹ said, "It is he," But others said, "By no means, he only re-
 sembles him." Yet the man declared, "I am he."
¹⁰ They therefore said to him, "How were thy eyes opened?"
¹¹ He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay
 and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of
 Siloe and wash.' And I went and washed, and I see."
¹² | And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not
 know."

9, 2: The question reflects the common Old Testament belief that each and every illness is a sign of a specific sin. Jesus does not deny that at times a specific illness is caused by a specific sin, nor does he deny the connection in general between sin and suffering.

9, 3: *The works of God*: the miracle about to be performed.

9, 4: Jesus says metaphorically that he must perform his ministry during the time allotted him by the Father.

9, 5: The following miracle will be a sign of the truth of "I am the light of the world," the spiritual light for all men (see 8, 12 n).

9, 6-7: Although there is no direct parallel to this cure in the synoptics, see a similar cure in Mk 8, 22-26.

9, 7: Jn exploits the meaning of the pool, "sent." Jesus is called "the one sent" forty times in the fourth Gospel. Here the meaning is: just as Jesus is sent by the Father to cure, so the pool is "sent" by our Lord to cure the blind man. Jn wants to teach that just as the temple exhausts its full significance in Jesus, so the meaning of the pool exhausts its full significance in Jesus. See Is 8, 6 n. The notion of sending plays a large role in the fourth Gospel. Some interpreters who hold as probable that John presents the miracle of the blind man's cure as a symbol of Sacramental baptism (see 4, 13-14 n on the Christian meaning) point out similarities to baptism as described in 3, 3-7, and to the repetition of "blind from birth" in vv. 1, 20, 32.

- 13 They took him who had been blind to the Pharisees.
 14 Now it was a Sabbath on which Jesus made the clay and
 15 opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees asked him
 how he received his sight. But he said to them, "He put
 clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see."
 16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This man is
 not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But
 others said, "How can a man who is a sinner work these
 17 signs?" And there was a division among them. | Again
 therefore they said to the blind man, "What dost thou say
 of him who opened thy eyes?" But he said, "He is a prophet."
 18 The Jews therefore did not believe of him that he had
 been blind and had got his sight, until they called the
 19 parents of the one who had gained his sight, | and ques-
 tioned them, saying, "Is this your son, of whom you say
 20 that he was born blind? How then does he now see?" His
 parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our
 21 son, and that he was born blind; | but how he now sees we
 do not know, or who opened his eyes we ourselves do not
 know. Ask him; he is of age, let him speak for himself."
 22 These things his parents said because they feared the Jews.
 For already the Jews had agreed that if anyone were to con-
 23 fess him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the syna-
 gogue. This is why his parents said, "He is of age; question
 him."
 24 They therefore called a second time the man who had
 been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God! We our-
 25 selves know that this man is a sinner." He therefore said,
 "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do
 26 know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." They therefore
 said to him, "What did he do to thee? How did he open
 27 thy eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and

9, 16: The dilemma is: Jesus is a sinner because he broke the Sabbath by curing; but a sinner cannot perform a cure.

9, 22: *The Jews*: see 1, 19 n. *Put out of the synagogue*: disobedient Jews were excluded from the synagogue for three thirty-day periods. The impenitent person was then "banned" but not from participation in religious community practices. In fact, the purpose of all these penalties of exclusion was to lead the person back to the synagogue. Hence, because Jn uses here a Greek word not found in the Greek Old Testament, and used in the New Testament only in 12, 42; 16, 2, some scholars believe that the evangelist refers to the "Heretic Benediction" of 85-90 A.D. which excluded from the synagogue Jews who became Christians.

you have heard. Why would you hear again? Would you
 28 also become his disciples?" They heaped abuse on him
 therefore, and said, "Thou art his disciple, but we are dis-
 29 ciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; but
 30 as for this man, we do not know where he is from." In
 answer the man said to them, "Why, herein is the marvel,
 that you do not know where he is from, and yet he opened
 31 my eyes. Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but
 if anyone is a worshipper of God, and does his will, him
 32 he hears. Not from the beginning of the world has it been
 33 heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If
 34 this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They
 answered and said to him, "Thou wast altogether born in
 sins, and dost thou teach us?" And they turned him out.
 35 Jesus heard that they had turned him out, and when he
 had found him, said to him, "Dost thou believe in the
 36 Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord,
 37 that I may believe in him?" And Jesus said to him, "Thou
 hast both seen him, and he it is who speaks with thee."
 38 And he said, "I believe, Lord." And falling down, he
 worshipped him.
 39 And Jesus said, "For judgment have I come into this
 world, that they who do not see may see, and they who see
 40 may become blind." And some of the Pharisees who were
 with him heard this, and they said to him, "Are we also
 41 blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would
 not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin
 remains."

9, 32: *Not from the beginning of the world*: probably a Semitic expression for "never."

9, 35: *Son of God*: the better reading in the Greek is, "Son of Man" (see Mt 8, 20 n).

9, 37: The man received physical and spiritual light.

9, 38: *Worshipped*: revered. Just as the Samaritan woman grew in her appraisal of Jesus (see 4, 42 n), so does the blind man. In v. 11, our Lord is "the man . . . Jesus." In v. 17, "a prophet." In v. 38, "Lord" or Messia (according to v. 35).

9, 39: *That they who do not see may see*: Jesus came so that the well-disposed may see his message spiritually, and that "they who see" independently of him such as the Pharisees (v. 40), "may become blind" and then see spiritually.

9, 41: *Are we also blind?*: for the evangelist's use of ironical statements see 7, 35 n. *If you were blind . . . not have sin*: if they would at least admit being spiritually blind, yet seek his light.

10

- 1** *The Good Shepherd* "Amen, amen, I say to you, he who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs another way, is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is shepherd of the sheep. To this man the gatekeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them forth. And when he has let out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But to a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."
- 6** This parable Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.
- 7** Again, therefore, Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever have come are thieves and robbers; but the sheep have not heard of them. | I am the door. If anyone enter by me he shall be

10, 1-21: In spite of the evangelist's use of the Greek word for parable in v. 6, scholars dispute whether this passage is a parable, an allegory, or a symbolic discourse (a juxtaposition of symbolic and non-metaphorical statements). In general the parabolic interpretation explains that the door is Jesus; the flock means his chosen ones; the thieves and robbers are those who work against the salvation of the flock. The other two opinions would admit this general explanation, but the allegorical interpretation attributes more meanings to other details (see 10, 8 n and 10, 9-10 n).

10, 1-10: The narrative evokes the familiar Palestinian life and customs of shepherds. A watchman guarded a low-walled enclosure with a central gate. The shepherds passed the night in their individual family tents. In the morning each shepherd came to the gate of the enclosure to call his flock and lead it to pasture.

10, 3: *Calls . . . by name*: by means of a shout or noise recognizable to the shepherd's own flock.

10, 6: *They*: refers most probably to the Pharisees mentioned in v. 40.

10, 7ff: The explanation of vv. 1-5.

10, 7: *The door*: Jesus.

10, 8: *All who ever have come*: the Greek text adds "before me." *Thieves and robbers*: the Pharisees, according to the allegorical interpretation.

10, 9-10: The tendency among allegorical interpreters is to say that the door symbolizes Jesus under two aspects. First: the door, which allows the shepherds to enter, signifies Jesus who appoints shepherds as leaders of his people. (The "parabolic" interpreters do not admit this allegorical aspect. One reason may be that it would seem to mean the same as the gatekeeper in v. 3). Secondly: the door through which the sheep pass, signifies those who will be saved and receive "life" everlasting (v. 10).

10 safe, and shall go in and out, and shall find pastures. The thief comes only to steal, and slay, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down
12 his life for his sheep. But the hireling, who is not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf snatches
13 and scatters the sheep; | but the hireling flees because he is a hireling, and has no concern for the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine
15 know me, | even as the Father knows me and I know the
16 Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one
17 fold and one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me,
18 because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. Such is the command I have received from my Father."

19 Again there arose a division among the Jews because
20 of these words. Many of them were saying, "He has a
21 devil and is mad. Why do you listen to him?" Others were saying, "These are not the words of one who has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

22 *At the Feast of the Dedication* Now there took place at Jerusalem the feast of the Dedication; and it was winter.
23 And Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's portico.
24 The Jews therefore gathered round him, and said to him, "How long dost thou keep us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us openly."

10, 10: *Life*: see 1, 4 n.

10, 11: *I am*: see 8, 24 n. *The good shepherd*: there are copious Old Testament texts describing God as the shepherd (see Is 40, 11). The metaphor of the shepherd conveys the idea of mutual knowledge and love between him and his flock (v. 14) in contrast to the hireling. The shepherd is "good" to the point of voluntary death, if necessary.

10, 16: *Other sheep . . . not of this fold*: refers to the non-believing Jews and to the Gentiles. As an example of reference to the Gentiles see 12, 20. *I must bring*: I must lead. *One fold*: in Greek, "one flock." The meaning remains the same.

10, 20: Diabolical possession and insanity were closely associated.

10, 22: *The feast of the Dedication*: see 1 Mc 4, 59 n.

10, 23: *In Solomon's portico*: see The Temple of Herod, p. 44. Jesus may have been walking in this covered walk instead of in the open courts because "it was winter" (v. 22).

- 25 Jesus answered them, "I tell you and you do not believe
The works that I do in the name of my Father, these be
26 witness concerning me. But you do not believe because
27 you are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and
28 I know them and they follow me. And I give them everlasting
life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any
29 snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given
me is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch any
30 thing out of the hand of my Father. I and the Father are
one."
- 31.32 The Jews therefore took up stones to stone him. Jesus
answered them, "Many good works have I shown you from
my Father. For which of these works do you stone me?"
- 33 The Jews answered him, "Not for a good work do we
stone thee, but for blasphemy, and because thou, being
man, makest thyself God."
- 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I
said you are gods'?"
- 35 "If he called them gods to whom the word of God was
36 addressed (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say
of him whom the Father has made holy and sent into the
world, 'Thou blasphemest,' because I said, 'I am the Son
37 of God'? If I do not perform the works of my Father, do
38 not believe me. But if I do perform them, and if you are
not willing to believe me, believe the works, that you may
know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the
Father."
- 39 They sought therefore to seize him; and he went forth
out of their hands.

10, 29: *What . . . is greater than all*: one of several other acceptable readings of the Greek is: "My Father who has given them to me is greater than all," that is, greater than all the opposing powers in the world that would want to take Christ's followers away from him.

10, 30: *I and the Father are one*: in the broader biblical sense of 5, 19f; 8, 16; 10, 15; the immediate meaning of this unity is to will and to do the same things. Even though the Jews did not understand in scholastic categories the existence of a metaphysical unity of two natures (human and divine) in one divine person, they understood, as v. 33 testifies, in an equivalent way.

10, 34-36: If the psalmist calls the judges godlike (see Ps 81, 6 n) because they represent God in administering his law, why do our Lord's critics call a blasphemer him "whom the Father has made holy and sent into the world" when he says, "I am the Son of God"?

10, 39: Thus far this is at least the fourth unsuccessful attempt to arrest Jesus.

40 *Jesus in Perea* And again he went away beyond the Jordan, to the place where John was at first baptizing; and there he
 41 stayed. And many came to him; and they were saying, "John
 42 indeed worked no sign. All things, however, that John said of this man were true." And many believed in him.

11

1 *The Raising of Lazarus* Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
 2 Now it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet dry with her hair, whose brother Lazarus
 3 was sick. The sisters therefore sent to him, saying, "Lord behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."
 4 But when Jesus heard this, he said to them, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that
 5 through it the Son of God may be glorified." Now Jesus
 6 loved Martha and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was sick, he remained two more days in
 7 the same place. Then afterwards he said to his disciples, "Let us go again into Judea."
 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, just now the Jews were seeking to stone thee; and dost thou go there again?"
 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he

10, 40: Jesus departs from Jerusalem to "Bethany beyond the Jordan" (1, 28) where the Baptist first testified that Jesus was the Messiah.

10, 41: *No sign*: no miracle.

11, 1: *Lazarus . . . Mary . . . Martha*: the evangelist mentions them here for the first time. Lk gives an account on Mary and Martha (Lk 10, 38-42) and mentions a fictitious Lazarus in a parable (Lk 16, 20ff).

11, 3: The sisters called for Jesus before Lazarus died.

11, 4a: Apparently through his infused knowledge, Jesus knows the outcome because Lazarus will not remain dead. See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to the Gospels.

11, 5-6: Either Jesus delayed two days to stress the fact of the death of Lazarus, or to show that his acts were dictated by God, not by his friends.

11, 8: A reference to 10, 31.

11, 9-10: *Twelve hours in the day*: twelve hours of daylight. The lesson is: do God's work while he still gives you the opportunity. Because of Jn's previous symbolic use of "hour" as the hour of Christ's redeeming death (see 2, 4 n) and of light ("I am the light of the world" 8, 12), some experts interpret this to mean that the hour of Christ's death will illumine mankind.

- 10 sees the light of this world. But if he walks in the night he stumbles, because the light is not in him."
- 11 These things he spoke, and after this he said to the "Lazarus, our friend, sleeps. But I go that I may wake him from sleep." His disciples therefore said, "Lord, 12 he sleeps, he will be safe." Now Jesus had spoken of death, but they thought he was speaking of the repose 13 sleep. So then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead 14 and I rejoice on your account that I was not there, that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who is called 15 the Twin, said therefore to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
- 16 Jesus therefore came and found him already four days 17 in the tomb. Now Bethany was close to Jerusalem, some 18 fifteen stadia distant. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them on account of the 19 brother. When, therefore, Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary remained at home.
- 20 Martha therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst 21 been here my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever thou shalt ask of God, God will give 22 to thee."
- 23, 24 Jesus said to her, "Thy brother shall rise." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise at the resurrection 25 on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall

11, 11: *Lazarus . . . sleeps*: see 3, 4 n on statements of misunderstanding.

11, 14: Jesus knows about the death of Lazarus apparently through his infused knowledge. See "Christ's Knowledge" in the Introduction to the Gospels.

11, 15: In v. 4b the purpose of the miracle is to glorify God; here it is to fortify the faith of the disciples.

11, 16: *Thomas . . . the Twin*: in Hebrew, Thomas means twin. The remark of Thomas reflects the fear expressed in v. 8 in spite of the counter-remarks of Jesus in vv. 9-15.

11, 18: *Some fifteen stadia*: about two miles.

11, 23: Intentionally vague, Jesus tells Martha that her brother "shall rise."

11, 24: Belief in the resurrection was a common Jewish belief. See 3, 4 n on statements of misunderstanding.

11, 25: *And the life*: textual critics often delete these words because they are not found in some Greek manuscripts. The expression, "I am the resurrection," is not an abstract definition of his nature but means "I give resurrection." This purposely ambiguous statement is explained in the rest of vv. 25f. One probable explanation of this obscure passage is: He who believes in Christ, even if he die, shall

26 live; | and whoever lives and believes in me, shall never
27 die. Dost thou believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord,
I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who
hast come into the world."

28 And when she had said this, she went away and quietly
called Mary her sister, saying, "The Master is here and calls
29 thee." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and came
30 to him, | for Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was
still at the place where Martha had met him.

31 When, therefore, the Jews who were with her in the
house and were comforting her, saw Mary rise up quickly
and go out, they followed her, saying, "She is going to
the tomb to weep there."

32 When, therefore, Mary came where Jesus was, and
saw him, she fell at his feet, and said to him, "Lord, if
thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When, therefore, Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who
had come with her weeping, he groaned in spirit and was
34 troubled, | and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said
35.36 to him, "Lord, come and see." And Jesus wept. The
37 Jews therefore said, "See how he loved him." But some
of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the
blind, have caused that this man should not die?"

38 Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, came to
the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid against
39 it. | Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister
of him who was dead, said to him, "Lord, by this time he
40 is already decayed, for he is dead four days." Jesus said to
her, "Have I not told thee that if thou believe thou shalt
41 behold the glory of God?" They therefore removed the
stone. And Jesus, raising his eyes, said, "Father, I give thee

live (he shall live again spiritually through Christ's redeeming grace on the cross).

11, 26: *And whoever lives (supernaturally or spiritually) and believes in me, shall never die* (supernaturally or spiritually on earth): Jesus does not promise Martha that he will now resurrect Lazarus, nor does he speak of the resurrection on the last day, but he comforts her with his teaching that true supernatural life never dies.

11, 27: Martha acknowledges that Jesus is the Messia ("the Christ").

11, 33: *He groaned in spirit and was troubled*: another translation may be: "He shuddered interiorly and was profoundly moved." The Greek words express the profound emotions of anger or indignation controlled with much effort.

11, 38: *Again groaning in himself*: "again shuddering interiorly."

11, 39: *He is already decayed*: the Greek more literally reads: "There is already a stench."

42 thanks that thou hast heard me. Yet I knew that thou always hearest me; but because of the people who stand round, I spoke, that they may believe that thou hast sent
 43 me." When he had said this, he cried out with a loud
 44 voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And at once he who had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with bandages, and his face was tied up with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

45 *The Council* Many therefore of the Jews who had come
 46 to Mary, and had seen what he did, believed in him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done.

47 The chief priests and the Pharisees therefore gathered together a council, and said, "What are we doing? for this man
 48 is working many signs. If we let him alone as he is, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

49 But one of them, Caiphas, being high priest that year, said
 50 to them, "You know nothing at all; | nor do you reflect that it is expedient for us that one man die for the people, instead
 51 of the whole nation perishing." This, however, he said not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that
 52 Jesus was to die for the nation; | and not only for the nation, but that he might gather into one the children of God who
 53 were scattered abroad. So from that day forth their plan was to put him to death.

54 *Jesus in Ephrem* Jesus therefore no longer went about

11, 44: *Bandages*: linen bands.

11, 47: *What are we doing?* . . . *signs*: the chief priests and the Pharisees are not doing anything while Jesus is performing many miracles.

11, 48: This verse may well be a deliberate ironical statement characteristic of the evangelist (see 7, 35 n), for the leaders did not leave Jesus alone—they crucified him. When Jn wrote the Gospel many pagans all over the Mediterranean world did "believe in him" and the Romans had already conquered Palestine and destroyed their temple ("place").

11, 50: It is better for them that Jesus die than to have the nation destroyed by the Romans because of an insurgent Messiah. However, the evangelist knows that Jesus will die to redeem all men from sin.

11, 51-52: *He prophesied that Jesus was to die for the nation*: Caiphas prophesied unintentionally that Jesus would die not only to save the nation from the Romans, but that he would die for the Jewish nation and for the Gentiles.

11, 54: *Ephrem*: more correctly, Ephraim, a village about fourteen miles north of Jerusalem.

openly among the Jews, but withdrew to the district near the desert, to a town called Ephrem; and there he stayed with his disciples.

- ⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand; and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover,
⁵⁶ in order to purify themselves. And they were looking for Jesus. And as they stood in the temple they were saying to one another, "What do you think, that he is not coming to the feast?" But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that, if anyone knew where he was, he should report it, so that they might seize him.

12

- ¹ *The Anointing at Bethany* Jesus therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus, whom Jesus
² had raised to life, had died. And they made him a supper there; and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him.
³ Mary therefore took a pound of ointment, genuine nard of great value, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and with her hair wiped his feet dry. And the house was filled with the odor
⁴ of the ointment. Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, he
⁵ who was about to betray him, said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor?"
⁶ Now he said this, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and holding the purse, used to take

11, 55: *To purify themselves*: according to Nm 9, 6-13, certain ritual purifications had to be carried out before the pilgrims could properly celebrate the Passover.

11, 56: *Not coming to the feast?*: the pilgrims wondered whether Jesus would stay away for fear of being arrested.

12, 1-8: For par, and on the relation between Jn's account and Lk 7, 36-50, see Mt 26, 6-13 n.

12, 1: *Six days before the Passover*: the Saturday before "Good Friday." Mk 14, 1 places this scene on the Wednesday preceding "Good Friday." There is no adequate explanation of this discrepancy. *Bethany where Lazarus . . . had died*: a reference to 11, 1ff.

12, 2: *Martha served*: according to Mt 26, 6 and Mk 14, 3 the house where the meal was served was that of Simon the leper.

12, 3: *Mary*: not Mary Magdalene. See Mk 14, 3 n.

12, 5: *Three hundred denarii*: since a denarius equals a day's wage for a laborer, three hundred denarii equal the wages for ten months.

12, 6: *A thief*: this is the only mention that Judas, the treasurer of the group, was a thief.

- 7 what was put in it. Jesus therefore said, "Let her be—that she
 8 may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you have
 always with you, but you do not always have me."
 9 Now the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was
 there; and they came, not only because of Jesus, but that they
 might see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.
 10 But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also.
 11 For on his account many of the Jews began to leave them
 and to believe in Jesus.
- 12 **Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem** Now the next day, the
 great crowd which had come to the feast, when they
 13 heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches
 of palms and went forth to meet him. And they cried out,
 "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
 Lord, the king of Israel!"
 14 And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is
 15 written, | "Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, thy king comes,
 sitting upon the colt of an ass."
 16 These things his disciples did not at first understand. But
 when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these
 things were written about him, and that they had done these
 things to him.
 17 The crowd therefore, which was with him when he called
 Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead, bore
 18 witness to him. And the reason why the crowd also went to
 meet him was that they heard that he had worked this sign.

12, 7: *That she may keep . . . my burial*: the meaning is: the reason for not selling the ointment was that the woman might keep it to anoint Jesus in anticipation of his burial (see Mt 26, 12 n).

12, 8: See Mt 26, 11 n.

12, 9: *The Jews*: not exclusively the Jewish leaders which would be Jn's ordinary meaning for "Jews."

12, 12-16: See par Mt 21, 1-11.

12, 13: *Hosanna*: see Mk 11, 10 n. *Blessed is he . . . of the Lord*: see Ps 117, 26 n. *The king of Israel*: this title is added to the quotation from Ps 117, 26. It was a current Messianic title.

12, 15: *Fear not*: these opening words differ from the version of Za 9, 9 as quoted in par Mt 21, 5. Perhaps "Fear not" comes from Is 40, 9.

12, 16: Compare 2, 22. *That these things . . . things to him*: a clearer translation may be: "it was precisely these things which were written about him that they did to him."

12, 17: *Bore witness to him*: the crowd continued testifying in behalf of him.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "Do you see that we avail nothing? Behold, the entire world has gone after him!"

20 *Last Words of Jesus to the People* Now there were certain Gentiles among those who had gone up to worship on the feast. These therefore approached Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew; again, Andrew and Philip spoke to Jesus.

23 But Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, | it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. He who loves his life, loses it; and he who hates his life in this world, keeps it unto life everlasting. If anyone serves me, let him follow me; and where I am there also shall my servant be. If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him.

27 "Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? Father,

12, 19: Some biblicists interpret this as Johannine irony (see 7, 35 n), for the Pharisees admit: it looks like the whole world which he wants to save is really flocking after him.

12, 20: *Gentiles*: the Greek text says, *Ellenes*, which does not mean those who are racially Greek but those who are of non-Jewish birth (see 7, 35). It is not clear whether they were pagans or "God-fearers" (see Acts 2, 11 n).

12, 21-22: Since Philip and Andrew had Greek names, it is possible, not probable, that they had a Greek background and, if so, the "Greeks" may have chosen them as intermediaries because of their background.

12, 23: *Jesus answered them*: Jesus does not answer the Greeks directly but he refers to their problem, for in his words lies the assurance that his death and resurrection will open the door for missionaries to preach the Gospel to them (vv. 23-26). For "the hour" as in v. 27, see 2, 4 n. *Son of Man*: see Mt 8, 20 n.

12, 24: Jesus is the grain which "dies and brings forth much fruit."

12, 25: *It remains alone*: it remains a mere grain of wheat. *He who loves . . . life everlasting*: a clearer translation of this hyperbole on generosity may be: "He who loves himself ruins himself; but he who hates himself in this world, keeps himself for eternal life." This commitment of oneself to God is meant as a requirement for discipleship. See the same idea in Mk 8, 35.

12, 26: Compare Mk 8, 34. To serve Jesus means to follow him to death.

12, 27-30: This passage corresponds with the scene in the synoptic Gospels of the agony in the garden (Mt 26, 36-40) which Jn anticipates. Several commentators surmise that an editor, not Jn himself, placed this passage here.

12, 27: *My soul is troubled*: an expression of emotional feeling

save me from this hour! No, this is why I came to this hour. | Father, glorify thy name!" There came therefore a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Then the crowd which was standing round and had heard, said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "Not for me did this voice come, but for you.

"Now is the judgment of the world; now will the prince of the world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." Now he said this signifying by what death he was to die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ abides forever. And how canst thou say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus therefore said to them, "Yet a little while the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness may not overtake you. He who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

These things Jesus spoke, and he went away and hid himself from them.

which is most probably synonymous with that in 13, 21, but the extent of feeling is more strongly revealed in 11, 13.

12, 28: *Name*: Semitic term for person. *A voice from heaven*: most Catholics interpret this literally, or are noncommittal. *I have both glorified it*: through the past miracles of Jesus (see 11, 40). *And I will glorify it again*: through Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension.

12, 31: The significance of the "hour" of Christ's death, which is anticipated here, is the condemnation ("judgment") of the followers of Satan ("prince of the world"). Inasmuch as Christ's death will redeem men, it will loosen Satan's dominion over them.

12, 32: When Jesus will be crucified ("lifted up"), he will draw all men to himself. ("Men" not "things" according to some variant Greek manuscripts.)

12, 34: According to prevalent ideas, the Messia ("Christ") was expected to establish an everlasting kingdom on earth. These ideas were based on the Old Testament ("Law"), e.g., Is 9, 6, and on extrabiblical writings, e.g., Henoch 49, 2, "the Elect One . . . is for ever and ever." As subsequent events showed, the proper understanding proved to be that the Messia's crucifixion and ascension into heaven were to precede his eternal kingdom.

12, 35: Jesus does not answer directly but says (as in 7, 33) that he ("the light") will remain with them a little while.

12, 36: This is his last invitation to the Jewish crowds who witnessed the miracles of Jesus. *Sons of light*: a Hebraic way of saying: "Take on the properties of the light" or "follow me."

37 *Incredulity* Now though he had worked so many signs in
 38 their presence, they did not believe in him; that the word
 which the prophet Isaiah spoke might be fulfilled, "Lord, who
 has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the
 Lord been revealed?"

39 This is why they could not believe, because Isaiah said
 40 again, | "He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts;
 lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their mind,
 and be converted, and I heal them."

41 Isaiah said these things when he saw his glory and spoke
 of him.

42 And yet, even among the rulers, many believed in him;
 but because of the Pharisees they did not acknowledge it, lest
 43 they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the
 glory of men more than the glory of God.

44 But Jesus cried out, and said, "He who believes in me,
 45 believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees
 46 me, sees him who sent me. I have come a light into the world,
 that whoever believes in me may not remain in the darkness.
 47 And if anyone hears my words, and does not keep them, it
 is not I who judge him; for I have not come to judge the
 48 world, but to save the world. He who rejects me, and does
 not accept my words, has one to condemn him. The word that
 49 I have spoken will condemn him on the last day. For I have
 not spoken on my own authority, but he who sent me, the
 Father, has commanded me what I should say, and what I

12, 37-40: Judging from Rom 9—11, a problem which puzzled
 the early Christians was the non-conversion of the Jews after Christ's
 public ministry which was full of miracles and discourses. In answer,
 Jn rereads Isaiah in the light of the failure of Jesus to convert the Jews.

12, 38: See Is 53, 1 (part of the fourth servant song).

12, 40: See Is 6, 9-10 n.

12, 41: The evangelist alludes to Isaiah's vision of God's glory
 (Is 6, 1-4), and reinterprets Is 53, 1 (v. 38) and Is 60, 9-10 (v. 40)
 as visions of the future, i.e., as seeing not God's glory but Christ's
 glory and speaking not of God but of Christ.

12, 42: *Put out of the synagogue*: see 9, 22 n.

12, 44-50: This passage may be on one of the talks of Jesus without
 giving an indication of time, place, audience, circumstances, or it
 may be a summary of our Lord's preaching on his mission on earth,
 on the revelation of the Father, on judgment, and on eternal life.
 There are other opinions.

12, 45: *Sees*: with the eyes of faith.

12, 46: *A light into the world*: see 8, 12 n.

12, 47: *I have not come . . . save the world*: see the same idea
 in 3, 17.

50 should declare. And I know that his commandment is everlasting life. The things, therefore, that I speak, I speak as the Father has bidden me."

II. THE PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

I. THE LAST SUPPER

13

¹ *The Washing of the Feet* Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that the hour had come for him to pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end.

² And during the supper, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come forth from God and was going to God, rose from the supper and laid aside his garments, and taking a towel girded himself. Then he poured water into the basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to dry them with the towel with which he was girded.

⁶ He came, then, to Simon Peter. And Peter said to him, ⁷ "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" | Jesus answered and said

12, 50: God's doctrine ("commandment") gives eternal life and therefore replaces the Law (compare 5, 39).

13, 1-20: The narrative of the washing of the feet is found only in Jn's Gospel.

13, 1: *Before the feast of the Passover*: the day (13 Nisan, Thursday) before the Passover (14 Nisan, Friday). See 18, 28 n. *The hour*: see 2, 4 n. *To the end*: it is disputed whether this Greek expression means that Jesus loved them to the last moment (of his life) or loved them "completely." Perhaps both ideas are envisioned.

13, 3: Jesus intended to go through the humiliation of washing the disciples' feet before joining his Father in eternal glory. This "glory through humiliation" is one of the principal themes of chs. 13-17.

13, 5: Washing the feet of others was considered so low a service that only non-Jewish slaves were asked to do it. Yet there were exceptions: disciples washed the feet of their rabbis; children washed their parents' and wives their husbands' feet.

13, 6: The Greek text has the emphatic "you" and "my" in the question: "Do you wash my feet?"

13, 7: Jesus says that Peter will understand after the passion and resurrection. In about five other places, Jn says equivalently that the

- to him, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt
 8 know hereafter." Peter said to him, "Thou shalt never wash
 my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash thee, thou
 9 shalt have no part with me." Simon Peter said to him,
 "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"
 10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash,
 and he is clean all over. And you are clean, but not all."
 11 | For he knew who it was that would betray him. This is
 why he said, "You are not all clean."
 12 Now after he had washed their feet and put on his gar-
 ments, when he had reclined again, he said to them, "Do
 13 you know what I have done to you? | You call me Master
 14 and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If, therefore, I
 the Lord and Master have washed your feet, you also ought
 15 to wash the feet of one another. For I have given you an
 example, that as I have done to you, so you also should
 16 do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no servant is greater than
 his master, nor is one who is sent greater than he who sent
 17 him. If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you

disciples will not understand Christ's words and deeds till after the passion and resurrection.

13, 8: *Have no part with me*: commentators differ on the meaning "of part" in Greek. Does it mean that Peter will not share eternal life in heaven? Or does it mean the Eucharist and priesthood? Membership in Christ's Church? The love of Jesus? Preferable is perhaps that it means in general the benefits derived from the Passion of Jesus which include all the aforementioned. Some commentators consider the insistence of Jesus on washing his disciples' feet an allusion to sacramental baptism, but see 13, 10 n.

13, 9: Since it is not clear what v. 8 means, it is not clear either just what Peter understood. His answer only emphatically asserts his attachment to Jesus.

13, 10: *He who has bathed . . . wash . . . clean all over*: the most obvious meaning is: he who has bathed has no need of rewashing entirely (including his hands and head) but he needs only to wash his feet. *Bathed*: since the Greek word here is the common New Testament word for baptism (1 Cor 6, 11; Ti 3, 5), some commentators believe that Jn intended to have his Christian readers understand the washing of the feet as symbolic of sacramental baptism. According to this interpretation, Jesus is saying that one who is baptized has no need of rebaptism (see 4, 13-14 n). However, the general consensus among scholars is that the washing of the feet is not to be understood as sacramental baptism.

13, 15: *I have given you an example*: it is commonly interpreted that the meaning of the example is readiness of spirit to give humble service to one another, not a command to repeat the service of feet washing.

13, 16: "Nor is one who is sent (Jesus) greater than he (God) who sent him" (see Mt 10, 24 n).

- 18 do them. | I do not speak of you all. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.'
- 19 I tell you now before it comes to pass, that when it has
- 20 come to pass you may believe that I am he. Amen, amen, I say to you, he who receives anyone I send, receives me; and he who receives me, receives him who sent me."
- 21 **The Betrayer** When Jesus had said these things he was troubled in spirit, and said solemnly, "Amen, amen, I say to
- 22 you, one of you will betray me." The disciples therefore looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.
- 23 Now one of his disciples, he whom Jesus loved, was
- 24 reclining at Jesus' bosom. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him, "Who is it of whom he speaks?"
- 25 He therefore, leaning back upon the bosom of Jesus, said
- 26 to him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he for whom I shall dip the bread, and give it to him." And when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot,
- 27 the son of Simon. And after the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him, "What thou dost, do quickly."
- 28 But none of those at the table understood why he said this
- 29 to him. For some thought that because Judas held the purse, Jesus had said to him, "Buy the things we need for the feast"; or that he should give something to the poor.

13, 18: The evangelist writes that Jesus quotes here Ps 40, 10, which describes the betrayal of Achitophel, the friend ("he who eats bread with me") and counselor of King David, as the backward kick of a horse against its master (see Ps 40, 10 n).

13, 19: *I am he*: by alluding to Achitophel's betrayal of David (v. 18), Jesus foretells the betrayal of Judas, so that his disciples may later know his true identity ("I am"). See 8, 24 n. Even at the time of the betrayal by Judas, what the disciples knew about Jesus was, at best, his Messianism. They did not realize that he was divine.

13, 20: A familiar saying in the first three Gospels.

13, 21-30: For par see Mt 26, 20-25 n.

13, 21: *Troubled in spirit*: because of the imminent betrayal by Judas (see 12, 27 n).

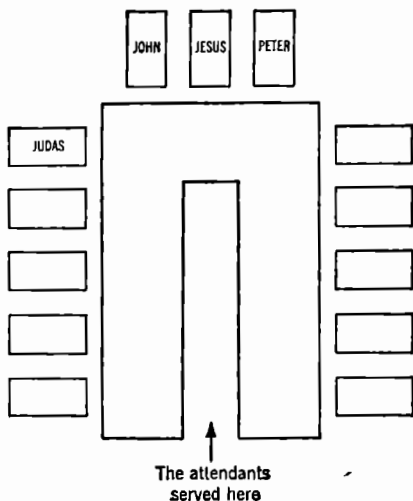
13, 23-27: To visualize the execution of these movements at table, see chart, Place Arrangement at the Last Supper, p. 373.

13, 23: The verse refers to the evangelist. See the beginning of the Introduction to this Gospel.

13, 24-26: Jesus must have spoken in a low voice to Peter and John, so that the other apostles could not overhear him.

13, 27: His command shows that Jesus knows of the forthcoming betrayal, and that he dies of his own accord. He is not caught unawares.

The place arrangement at the Last Supper



Couches were placed on the three sides of a square table. (See Jn 13, 23-27 n.)

On festive occasions, such as the Passover meal, the Jews would not sit at table as at ordinary meals, but they would recline on low divans. As they reclined, they rested their head on the left elbow, and drew their unsandaled feet up on the divan. The right hand was free to reach the table for food and drink. Peter reclining with his face toward the back of Jesus, could have signaled John and whispered, "Who is it of whom he speaks?" (Jn 13, 24). John, whose back was in front of Jesus, could have easily leaned back on "Jesus' bosom" (v. 23) and asked, "Lord, who is it?" Judas as treasurer could have easily been at the angle to see the needs of all those present. This position explains how Jesus could dip the morsel and give it to Judas (v. 26).

30 When, therefore, he had received the morsel, he went out quickly. Now it was night.

31 *The New Commandment* When, therefore, he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and
32 God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will glorify him at once.
33 "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and, as I said to the Jews, 'Where
34 I go you cannot come,' so to you also I say it now. A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that
35 as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

36 *Peter's Denials Predicted* Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where art thou going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow
37 later." Peter said to him, "Why can I not follow thee
38 now? I will lay down my life for thee." Jesus answered him, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Amen, amen, I say to thee, the cock will not crow before thou dost deny me thrice."

13, 30: *He went out quickly*: Judas left most likely because he realized that Jesus knew of his plot. *Now it was night*: since Jn knew it was evening, this remark symbolizes the betrayer's evil hour of darkness.

13, 31-32: These two verses describe the "hour" (see 2, 4 n). The passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are spoken of as already completed. *Son of Man*: the evangelist unites here the glory of the Son of Man with his suffering.

13, 32: *In himself*: God will give glory to himself through the Son's reunion with him in heaven.

13, 33: Jesus refers to his death and ascension. *Little children*: see 2, 1 n. *As I said to the Jews*: see 7, 33 n.

13, 34: This commandment of love is not new, for the disciples of a master or members of Israel are to love one another (Lv 19, 18), but it is new insofar as Jesus gives it to a new age of mankind that is about to dawn, and it is new insofar as love has a new exemplar in Jesus himself.

13, 36-38: For par see Mt 26, 30-35 n.

13, 36-37: Peter does not yet understand that Jesus is going to his death (v. 36), but according to v. 37 he seems to have an inkling of what is to happen.

13, 38: For the different traditions of this prediction see Mk 14, 30 n. The fulfillment of the triple denial is recorded in 18, 17-18 and vv. 25-27.

14

- ¹ *A Word of Comfort* "Let not your heart be troubled.
² You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many mansions. Were it not so, I should have
³ told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you to myself; that where I am, there you
⁴ also may be. And where I go you know, and the way you know."
⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where thou
⁶ art going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one
⁷ comes to the Father but through me. If you had known me, you would also have known my Father. And henceforth you do know him, and you have seen him."
⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father and it
⁹ is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known me? Philip, he who sees me sees also the Father. How canst thou
¹⁰ say, 'Show us the Father'? | Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I

14—17: Scholars have written much on the order of chs. 14—16, but no solution is in sight. There are many parallels in ch. 14 and chs. 15—16. Both sections contain eight themes: the relation of Jesus to the Father; the departure of Jesus and his return; his revelation of the Father; prayer; keeping the commandments; the Paraclete; peace; Satan. Consolation runs through all these themes.

It is often difficult in chs. 14—17 to separate Christ's discourses from the evangelist's reflections (see 3, 13 n).

14, 2: *In my Father's house there are many mansions*: this text does not refer to different degrees of happiness in heaven. Jesus comforts the disciples: they need not be sad because they will be reunited in heaven ("my Father's house") where there is plenty of room ("many mansions"). *I go to prepare a place for you*: not in the material sense but in the metaphorical sense of preparing for their entrance into heaven through his passion and ascension.

14, 3: A reference to the second and final coming of Jesus at the end of the world.

14, 4: Jesus is going to the Father through the humiliation of his passion and death, and the glory of his resurrection and ascension.

14, 5: See 3, 4 n on statements of misunderstanding.

14, 6: *I am*: for the "I sayings" see 6, 35 n. *I am the way*: I show the way to the Father ("No one comes to the Father but through me"). See 12, 45. *And the truth and the life*: because Jesus leads men to the Father, the font of truth and life, Jesus himself is the truth since he teaches it, and he is (eternal) life since he grants it through the revelation of the Father (17, 3). *The truth*: this is the only place where the statement of Jesus, "I am the truth" is recorded.

14, 7: *You have seen him*: in me.

- speak to you I speak not on my own authority. But the
 11 Father dwelling in me, it is he who does the works. Do
 you believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?
 12 | Otherwise believe because of the works themselves. Amen
 amen, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that
 I do he also shall do, and greater than these he shall do
 13 because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask
 in my name, that I will do, in order that the Father may
 14 be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my
 name, I will do it.
 15,16 "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will
 ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to
 17 dwell with you forever, | the Spirit of truth whom the
 world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows
 him. But you shall know him, because he will dwell with
 you, and be in you.

14, 11: This verse may be read declaratively: "Believe me, I am in the Father . . ."

14, 12: *Otherwise believe (me) because of the works*: because of the "miracles" as already stated in 5, 36. *The works that I do he also shall do*: Jesus refers to his miracles and ministry. *And greater . . . to the Father*: after Jesus will have returned to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit (7, 39), the disciples and their successors will make more converts than Jesus did. This is the interpretation of commentators in general.

14, 13: *In my name*: not as if by means of a magical formula but by means of intimate union with Jesus. *Glorified*: whatsoever Jesus does gives glory to the Father.

14, 15-23: If the disciples keep his commandments, the Holy Spirit will be with them (vv. 15-17), Jesus will be with them (vv. 18-22), and so will the Father (v. 23).

14, 15: *If you love me, keep my commandments*: judging from the repetition of this thought in v. 21 and from its interpretation by "word," and "words" in vv. 23-24, the "commandments" are not the ten commandments, but faith expressed through a total and practical commitment.

14, 16: *Advocate*: in Greek, the word is "Paraclete." Jn alone uses it five times in his Gospel and in 1 Jn 2, 1. Although Paraclete has different shades of meaning in different passages, its generic meaning is intercessor and helper rather than comforter. "Paraclete" is not a title of the Holy Spirit but a designation for the function of him or of Jesus (see 1 Jn 2, 1).

14, 17: *The Spirit of truth*: since Jesus will return to the Father, he will send in his place another Paraclete as a helper to make them understand the truths which Jesus preached. He will not teach new truths. See 16, 13. *Whom the world cannot receive . . . nor knows him*: the world cannot welcome the Holy Spirit because it is hostile to him. *But you . . .*: but the disciples will recognize the Holy Spirit because they are spiritually attuned to receiving him in their community ("with you") and individually ("in you").

- 18.19 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world no longer sees me. But you see
 20 me, for I live and you shall live. In that day you will know
 21 that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. But he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."
 22 Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, "Lord, how is it that thou art about to manifest thyself to us, and not to the
 23 world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.
 24 He who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.
 25 "These things I have spoken to you while yet dwelling
 26 with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you.
 27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be
 28 troubled, or be afraid. You have heard me say to you, 'I go away and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would indeed rejoice that I am going to the Father, for

14, 18: *I will come to you*: not in the apparitions after the resurrection nor at the end of the world but through a spiritual eternal life.

14, 19: *A little while . . . world . . . sees me*: the hostile world will no longer see him after his death because it does not believe in him. "But you will see me" spiritually because Jesus has eternal life and the disciples will have it.

14, 20: *That day*: the post-resurrection period to the end of the world. The relationship between Jesus with the Father (10, 38) and between Jesus with his disciples will be strengthened.

14, 21: See 14, 15 n. *Manifest myself*: supernaturally.

14, 22: The question reflects the popular notion that the Messiah would show himself to the world. For the answer of Jesus see 14, 19 n.

14, 23: See 14, 15 n.

14, 26: See 14, 17 n. *Bring to your mind*: at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will not merely recall what Jesus said but enlighten them to allow his teachings to penetrate deeply into their mind.

14, 27: The peace that Jesus bestows on them as a gift is not a wish for their material prosperity but for their eternal bliss.

14, 28: *The Father is greater than I*: many commentators explain that Jesus refers not to his divine nature but to his human nature that he will also retain in his heavenly glorified state. Others explain it, more in keeping with the context here, that the Father is greater since Jesus came on earth to execute the will of the Father (6, 38; 8, 28).

- 29 the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it has come to pass you
 30 may believe. I will no longer speak much with you, for the prince of the world is coming, and in me he has nothing.
 31 But he comes that the world may know that I love the Father, and that I do as the Father has commanded me. Arise, let us go from here.

15

- 1 **Union with Christ** "I am the true vine, and my Father
 2 is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he will take away; and every branch that bears fruit he
 3 will cleanse, that it may bear more fruit. You are already
 4 clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless
 5 you abide in me. | I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for
 6 without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and
 7 they shall burn. If you abide in me, and if my words abide

14, 29: Jesus refers to his death and its subsequent events, e.g., the enlightenment which the Holy Spirit will bring.

14, 30: *Prince of the world is coming*: see Lk 4, 13 n. *And in me he has nothing*: the devil has no power over Jesus.

14, 31: *But he comes that the world may know*: a clearer translation is: "But the world must learn" that in executing the Father's command to die on the cross, Jesus will have shown his love for his Father.

15, 1-2: *I am the true vine*: see 6, 35 n. Jesus ("vine"), and the Christians ("branches") are intimately united in love. The "branches" bear spiritual fruit to God ("vine-dresser").

15, 2: *Every branch . . . take away*: the same idea is in v. 6. *No fruit*: since the fruit is not specified, it may be love as described in vv. 12-17. *Bears fruit*: by living the Christian life of love (v. 12). *He will cleanse*: the Greek word connotes purification, perhaps through discipline and suffering.

15, 3: The disciples have already undergone some purification.

15, 4-6: The vine-branch metaphor emphasizes: just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it is united with the vine, so also there is no life of love without union with Christ.

15, 6: *Cast them into the fire*: the evangelist speaks figuratively here but he would not be adverse to mean hell fire by "fire," if we recall the measure of damnation he metes out to the evil ones (5, 29).

15, 7: *If you abide in me . . . words abide in you*: same idea as explained in 8, 31 n. *It shall be done to you*: you shall receive it. (See 14, 13.) If we compare v. 7 with 1 Jn 5, 14 the meaning is:

- 8 in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you. In this is my Father glorified, that you may bear very much fruit, 9 and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, I 10 also have loved you. Abide in my love. | If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.
- 12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another 13 as I have loved you. Greater love than this no one has, that 14 one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends 15 if you do the things I command you. No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known 16 to you. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you ask the 17 Father in my name he may give you. These things I command you, that you may love one another.
- 18 *The World's Hatred* "If the world hates you, know that 19 it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, 20 therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I have spoken to you: No servant is greater than his

the Christian who is intimately united with Jesus will ask for whatever is in conformity with the divine will and therefore will receive it.

15, 9: *As the Father has loved me*: by sending Jesus into the world to save it (3, 17), "I also have loved you" by revealing the Father to the disciples (v. 15b) and by choosing them (v. 16).

15, 10: See 14, 15 n.

15, 11: *My joy*: which comes from loving obedience to the Father.

15, 12: See 13, 34.

15, 13: The apex of God's love was the death of his Son for men, which was simultaneously the greatest expression of Christ's love for his friends.

15, 15: *No longer do I call you servants*: this does not imply that Jesus treated them as less than friends till now, but that he distinguishes them from those who have not yet become his friends by believing in him.

15, 16: The friendship between Jesus and his disciples is not one among equals, for Jesus had chosen the disciples with no merit on their part. The only true response that the disciples can make to Christ's friendship is to bear fruit and to have it ripen into eternal life through a life of faith and love (vv. 2, 4, 8).

15, 17: See v. 12.

master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. | He who hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them works such as no one else has done, they would have no sin. But now they have seen, and have hated both me and my Father; | but that the word written in their Law may be fulfilled, 'They have hated me without cause.'

"But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me. And you also bear witness, because from the beginning you are with me.

16

1 Persecution Predicted "These things I have spoken to you that you may not be scandalized. They will expel you from the synagogues. Yes, the hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering worship to God. And these things they will do because they have not known the Father nor me. But these things I have spoken to you, that when the time for them has come you may remember that I told you. These things, however, I did not tell you from the beginning, because I was with you.

5 The Rôle of the Advocate "And now I am going to him who sent me, and no one of you asks me, 'Where art thou going?' But because I have spoken to you these things,

15, 21: *Him*: the Father.

15, 22: *For their sin*: of disbelief in Christ's revelation.

15, 25: Just as the just man was hated with no reason (Pss 34, 19; 68, 5), so was Christ.

15, 26: See 14, 17 n.

15, 27: *You are*: you have been.

16, 1: *That you may not be scandalized*: that the disciples' faith may not be weakened. *Expel you from the synagogues*: see 9, 22 n.

16, 4: *Because I was with you*: there was no need to warn his disciples of danger when Jesus was with them to defend them.

16, 5: *Asks*: in contrast to a similar question (14, 5) the present tense of the Greek verb points to an inquiry about the immediate effect to the farewell of Jesus.

7 sorrow has filled your heart. But I speak the truth to you; it is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send
 8 him to you. And when he has come he will convict the
 9 world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment: | of sin,
 10 because they do not believe in me; | of justice, because I
 11 go to the Father, and you will see me no more; | and of judgment, because the prince of this world has already been judged.

12 "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot
 13 bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he will hear he will speak,
 14 and the things that are to come he will declare to you. He will glorify me, because he will receive of what is mine and
 15 declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine. That is why I have said that he will receive of what

16, 7: See 7, 39 for the same thought.

16, 8-11: Scholars vary in their interpretation of these obscure verses. The figurative background is that of a court trial in God's presence, in which the Holy Spirit is the accuser and the unbelieving world that clamored to have Jesus crucified is the accused. The trial is not at the end of the world but from the post-resurrection period onward.

16, 8: *When he has come*: to the individual believer. *He will convict*: he will not induce the unbelievers to admit their sin of having rejected Christ ("of sin, because they do not believe in me" v. 9); he will enlighten the Christians to understand Christ's teachings more deeply (see 14, 17 n and 3, 18-20). *Of sin, and of justice, and of judgment (condemnation)*: the Holy Spirit will shed light on these three to make them better understood.

16, 10: *Of justice . . . see me no more*: "justice" here means a victory in court. The Holy Spirit will help believers understand the victory of Christ's ascent to the Father.

16, 11: The Holy Spirit will help believers understand that in condemning Jesus to death on the cross, the unbelievers unwittingly condemned Satan ("the prince of this world") because Christ's redeeming death has broken Satan's power over men.

16, 13: *Spirit of truth*: see 14, 17 n. *Truth*: see 1, 14 n. *For he will not speak on his own authority . . . he will speak*: just as Jesus spoke on the authority of the Father (14, 10), so will the Holy Spirit enlighten believers on the same authority. *The things that are to come . . . to you*: the majority of commentators believe that this alludes to the apocalyptic prophecies (the events at the end of the world). Other interpreters add the gift of "prophecy" (1 Cor 14, 21-33).

16, 14: The Holy Spirit will reflect glory on Christ by teaching Christ's message more deeply.

16, 15: This is the evangelist's roundabout way of expressing the unity of divine revelation.

- 16 is mine, and will declare it to you. A little while and you shall see me no longer; and again a little while and you shall see me, because I go to the Father."
- 17 Some of his disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this he says to us, 'A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me'; and, 18 'I go to the Father?'" | They kept saying therefore, "What is this 'little while' of which he speaks? We do not know what he is saying."
- 19 But Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, and he said to them, "You inquire about this among yourselves because I said, 'A little while and you shall not see me, and 20 again a little while and you shall see me.' Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow 21 shall be turned into joy. A woman about to give birth has sorrow, because her hour has come. But when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the 22 anguish for her joy that a man is born into the world. And you therefore have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one shall 23 take from you. And in that day you shall ask me nothing. Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything 24 in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.
- 25 "These things I have spoken to you in parables. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in 26 parables, but will speak to you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name; and I do not say to you

16, 16: *A little while and you shall see me no longer*: an allusion to the death of Jesus. *And again a little while and you shall see me, because I go to the Father*: an allusion to his post-resurrection apparitions.

16, 20: *The world*: of unbelievers.

16, 23: *In that day you shall ask me nothing*: because of the clarifications of the Holy Spirit, beginning at Pentecost, the disciples will not have to ask any more questions. *If you ask . . . he will give it to you*: the Father will answer their prayers.

16, 24: See 14, 13-14.

16, 25: *In parables*: In this context, another translation may well be: "in figures" (of speech). Jesus does not mean that he always preached in figures of speech but that the full meaning of his teaching was veiled. *The hour*: the post-resurrection period. "To speak of the Father" summarizes all of Christ's teaching. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit (16, 12f).

16, 26-27: *In that day*: see 16, 23 n. The prayers of the disciples

- 27 that I will ask the Father for you, | for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me, and have believed
 28 that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father."
 29 His disciples said to him, "Behold, now thou speakest
 30 plainly, and utterest no parable. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and dost not need that anyone should question thee. For this reason we believe that thou camest forth from God."
 31.32 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each one to his own house, and to leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
 33 These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have affliction. But take courage, I have overcome the world."

17

¹ *Christ's Priestly Prayer for Unity* These things Jesus spoke; and raising his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, the

through the mediation of Jesus (14, 6) will be of such a nature that the Father will love them.

16, 29: The disciples believe that they now understand everything although Jesus promises them a fuller explanation through the Holy Spirit (see 16, 25 n).

16, 30: Because Christ guessed their question (cf. 19) the disciples claim that he knows everything and there is no need for further questions. They now repeat Christ's words (v. 27) to prove it.

16, 32: Jesus alludes to his forthcoming Passion and predicts that he will be abandoned by his apostles but the Father will remain with him. Jn states Christ's prediction of Peter's denial separately (13, 38). Mt 26, 34f and Mk 14, 30f fuse the predictions of Peter's denial and Christ's abandonment by the apostles. Lk does not record the prediction of Jesus that the apostles will abandon him.

16, 33: *These things . . . peace*: the reference is either to v. 2 or to the entire preceding discourse. *I have overcome the world*: through his imminent death and resurrection and his ascension (see Ap 5, 5 n).

17, 1-26: The longest of the prayers of Jesus. It has been called "The Priestly Prayer" since the sixteenth century. It was prayed either in the cenacle or on the way to Gethsemani. It is a prayer for himself to the Father (vv. 1-5); a prayer of intercession for his disciples (vv. 6-19); for the future members of his Church (vv. 20-24); and it ends with a review of Christ's mission (vv. 25-26). Although the Father-Son union is already stressed in the Gospel, this doctrine is more clearly shown in prayer form.

17, 1: *These things*: a reference to chs. 13-16. *Father*: a frequent

- hour has come! Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee, | even as thou hast given him power over all flesh, in order that to all thou hast given him he may give everlasting life. Now this is everlasting life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ. I have glorified thee on earth; I have accomplished the work that thou hast given me to do. And now do thou, Father, glorify me with thyself, with the glory that I had with thee before the world existed.
- 6 "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world. They were thine, and thou hast given them to me, and they have kept thy word. Now they have learnt that whatever thou hast given me is from thee; | because the words that thou hast given me I have given to them. And they have received them, and have known of a truth, that I came forth from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.
- 9 "I pray for them; not for the world do I pray, but for those whom thou hast given me, because they are thine; | and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou hast given me I guarded; and not one of them perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scripture

form of address to God in Jn's Gospel. *The hour*: see 2, 4 n. *Glorify*: the mutual glorification is explained in vv. 4-5.

17, 2: Inasmuch as the Son gives eternal life to all men, he glorifies the Father. *All flesh*: this Hebraic expression for the human race is found only here in Jn's Gospel.

17, 3: *Everlasting life*: see 14, 6 n.

17, 4: Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the assigned mission.

17, 5: *With thyself*: in God's presence.

17, 6: Jesus revealed the Father to the ("men") disciples (or believers in general) whom he gave to Jesus. *Word*: the message of Jesus.

17, 10: *I am glorified in them*: through their loyal acceptance of Christ's message.

17, 11: *I am coming to thee*: the evangelist frequently describes the Passion of Jesus as his going to the Father. *Keep in thy name*: in God's care.

17, 12: *Son of perdition*: Judas. *Scripture*: see 13, 18.

- 13 might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to thee; and these things I speak in the world, in order that they may
 14 have my joy made full in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them, because they
 15 are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that
 16 thou keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even
 17 as I am not of the world. | Sanctify them in the truth. Thy
 18 word is truth. Even as thou hast sent me into the world, so I
 19 also have sent them into the world. And for them I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.
 20 "Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also
 21 who through their word are to believe in me, | that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou
 22 hast sent me. And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are
 23 one: | I in them and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.
 24 "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; in order that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, because thou hast
 25 loved me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee, and these
 26 have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known, in order

17, 13: *In the world . . . in themselves*: a clearer translation may be, "while yet in the world that they may fully share in my joy."

17, 15: *From evil*: or from the Evil One (Satan).

17, 17-18: *Sanctify*: Jesus prays that God may make the disciples fit for the lifetime task of spreading God's message as it was revealed to them by Jesus himself.

17, 17: *Truth*: see 1, 14 n.

17, 18: *Sent me into the world*: see 10, 36.

17, 19: *For them I sanctify myself*: by offering himself to God through the cross. *That they also may be sanctified in truth*: many commentators explain that through the death of Jesus, the disciples received the sanctity and ability necessary to discharge their duties. One of several other interpretations is that the disciples became purified of their sins through Christ's death.

17, 20: Jesus prays for the converts which the disciples will make and for all future members of his Church.

17, 24: The wish of Jesus is that after the resurrection his disciples may be with him in heaven to enjoy his divine nature in "glory".

17, 26: *I have made known . . . name*: see 17, 6. *And will make it known*: through the Holy Spirit.

that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

II. THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS

18

- ¹ *Jesus Arrested* After saying these things, Jesus went forth with his disciples beyond the torrent of Cedron, where there was a garden into which he and his disciples entered.
- ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, since Jesus had often met there together with his disciples.
- ³ Judas, then, taking the cohort, and attendants from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.
- ⁴ Jesus therefore knowing all that was to come upon him,
- ⁵ went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" | They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Now Judas, who betrayed him, was also standing
- ⁶ with them. When, therefore, he said to them, "I am he,"
- ⁷ they drew back and fell to the ground. | So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of
- ⁸ Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he.
- ⁹ If, therefore, you seek me, let these go their way." That the word which he said might be fulfilled, "Of those whom thou hast given me, I have not lost one."
- ¹⁰ Simon Peter therefore, having a sword, drew it and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. Now

18, 1: *Cedron*: see Mk 14, 26 n. On the agony in the garden see par Mt 26, 36-46. (Compare the oratorios on the Passion according to St. John by Bach, Scarlatti, Schütz.)

18, 3: *Cohort*: from five to six hundred Roman soldiers from the fortress Antonia near the temple. *Attendants from*: or, "police provided by." It seems strange to scholars that Romans co-operated with Jewish militia in an arrest. Jn is the only evangelist to mention this co-operation.

18, 5: *I am he*: some interpret this as a reference to "I am who am" (see 8, 24 n).

18, 6: *Fell to the ground*: many experts interpret this literally but give weak explanations for it.

18, 8: The repetition is another way of highlighting the freedom of Christ in laying down his life.

18, 9: In speaking about not losing those who have been entrusted to him (see 6, 37-40 n), Jesus meant: not losing their supernatural life. Here he probably means not losing their "natural" life.

¹¹ the servant's name was Malchus. | Jesus therefore said to Peter, "Put up thy sword into the scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹² *Peter's Denial* The cohort therefore and the tribune and
¹³ the attendants of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him. And they brought him to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law
¹⁴ of Caiphas, who was the high priest that year. Now it was Caiphas who had given the counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

¹⁵ But Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high
¹⁶ priest. | But Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ The maid, who was portress, said therefore to Peter, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not."

¹⁸ | Now the servants and attendants were standing at a coal fire and warming themselves, for it was cold. And Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

¹⁹ The high priest therefore questioned Jesus concerning his
²⁰ disciples, and concerning his teaching. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews gather,
²¹ and in secret I have said nothing. Why dost thou question me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; behold, these know what I have said."

²² Now when he had said these things, one of the attendants

18, 11: *Shall I not . . . cup . . . given me?*: a flashback to the Gethsemani scene (see 12, 27-30 n).

18, 12: *Attendants of the Jews*: Jewish policemen.

18, 13: *They brought him to Annas first*: this encounter refers to the night session. See Mt 26, 57-68 n on the sequence of events. Annas had been high priest from 6-15 A.D. He was succeeded by four sons as well as by his son-in-law. Annas retained a strong influence.

18, 14: *Caiphas*: he was the central figure in the trial held by the Sanhedrin. *Counsel*: see 11, 51-52 n.

18, 15: *Another disciple*: the evangelist himself.

18, 17: The narrative of Peter's denials continues in vv. 25-27. See Mk 14, 66-72 n.

18, 18: *Attendants*: policemen.

18, 19-24: The night session conducted by Annas. See Mt 26, 57-68 n. This account, similar to Lk's, hardly resembles a trial. See Lk 22, 66-71 n.

- who was standing by struck Jesus a blow, saying, "Is that
 23 the way thou dost answer the high priest?" | Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken ill, bear witness to the evil; but if well, why dost thou strike me?"
- 24 And Annas sent him bound to Caiphas, the high priest.
 25 But Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They therefore said to him, "Art thou also one of his disciples?" He denied it, and said, "I am not." | One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Did I not see thee in the garden with
 27 him?" | Again, therefore, Peter denied it; and at that moment a cock crowed.
- 28 **Jesus before Pilate** They therefore led Jesus from Caiphas to the praetorium. Now it was early morning, and they themselves did not enter the praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.
- 29 Pilate therefore went outside to them, and said, "What
 30 accusation do you bring against this man?" They said to him in answer, "If he were not a criminal we should not

18, 27: The prediction of 13, 38 is here fulfilled.

18, 28—19, 16: See par Mt 27, 1-2 and 11-26 n.

18, 28: *Praetorium*: this Latin word at first meant the praetor's headquarters in a camp. Later it meant the official residence of the governor of a province (see 19, 13 n). The greatest objection to the presentation in the synoptic Gospels of the Last Supper as the passover meal on Thursday night (see Lk 22, 7 n) is based on this verse (Jn 18, 28). Since Jews become ritually unclean by entering a pagan building, they did not want to enter the praetorium and thereby be excluded from eating the evening paschal meal (see Acts 10, 28 n). Therefore, if Jn is correct in stating that the paschal meal occurred on Friday night, then the Last Supper of Thursday night, as recorded in the synoptic Gospels, was not the passover meal. One possible (not probable) opinion is that Jn symbolically places the paschal meal on Friday to make the slaying of the paschal lamb in the temple coincide with the slaying of the paschal lamb (Christ). Another possibility (not probability) is that Jn's date is correct. Consequently, on Thursday night Jesus would have anticipated the passover meal with many traits of a passover meal except the eating of the lamb. A third opinion is based on the different ways of calculating the Passover in the first century. Jesus, according to the first three evangelists, followed the Pharisees' calendar and celebrated the Passover on Thursday night. According to the fourth evangelist (Jn 18, 28), the Jewish priests followed the Sadducees' calendar and celebrated on Friday night. The theory (of Mlle. Jaubert), which follows the Sadducees' reckoning, is not supported by as many scholars now as it was when it first appeared.

18, 29: *Pilate*: see Mk 15, 1 n.

31 have handed him over to thee." Pilate therefore said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." The Jews, then, said to him, "It is not lawful
32 for us to put anyone to death." This was in fulfillment of what Jesus had said, indicating the manner of his death.
33 Pilate therefore again entered into the praetorium, and he summoned Jesus, and said to him, "Art thou the king of
34 the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Dost thou say this of thyself, or have others told thee of me?" Pilate answered, "Am I
35 a Jew? Thy own people and the chief priests have delivered thee to me. What hast thou done?" Jesus answered,
36 "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my followers would have fought that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not

18, 31: *Judge him according to your law*: Pilate, knowingly or unknowingly, forces the accusers to declare that they do not want an ordinary punishment, but capital punishment—the death of Jesus. *It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death*: it is still debated whether the Sanhedrin had the right to put anyone to death or whether this right was exclusively invested in the Roman procurator. The evangelist's statement favors the view that the Sanhedrin did *not* have the power and, therefore, through its leaders sought from Pilate the right to execute Jesus. If this interpretation is correct (as many scholars believe), it casts blame for Christ's execution in a sense more on the Jewish leaders than on Pilate (see Jn 19, 16 n). On the other hand, many non-Catholic scholars maintain that the Sanhedrin had the power to execute and that the Jewish leaders never made the statement ascribed to them by Jn. According to these scholars, the evangelist wrote it to cast the blame of Christ's execution on the Jewish leaders. At the time of writing there was animosity between Jews and Christians. Besides, it was advantageous for Christians to placate the Romans since they did not officially recognize the Christian religion. These scholars argue more persuasively about another disputed question: the stoning of Stephen. From their viewpoint, Stephen's execution was not the work of an unauthorized lynching mob (a position held by other scholars) but an example of the Sanhedrin's right to execute (see other opinions in Acts 7, 59 n). Regardless of the controversies about the Sanhedrin's power and about the evangelist's statement, it is difficult to escape the impression left by the whole trial narrative that the Jewish leaders wanted a political execution to cloak or support a religious offense (see Jn 19, 12 n). See "The Responsibility for Christ's Death", pgs. 398-399.

18, 32: See 12, 32f.

18, 34: If the question comes from Pilate, he would mean: "Are you a political king?" Jesus would, therefore, answer: "No." If the question comes from the Jews, they would presumably mean: "Are you a Messianic king?" Jesus would answer: "Yes."

18, 35: Since Pilate is not a Jew, the question does not come from him but from Christ's own people.

18, 36: Since the question is more precise, Jesus returns to it by dispelling any earthly overtones about his kingdom.

37 from here." Pilate therefore said to him, "Thou art then a king?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it; I am a king. This is why I was born, and why I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears 38 my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

And when he had said this, he went outside to the Jews 39 again, and said to them, "I find no guilt in him. | But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you wish, therefore, that I release to you the 40 king of the Jews?" They all therefore cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

19

1 *The Scouring and Crowning* Pilate, then, took Jesus and 2 had him scourged. And the soldiers, plaiting a crown of thorns, put it upon his head, and arrayed him in a purple 3 cloak. And they kept coming to him and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him.

4 Pilate therefore again went outside and said to them, "Behold, I bring him out to you, that you may know that I

18, 37: Pilate expected Jesus to deny the title of king immediately and unqualifiedly. The governor is so struck when Jesus retains the title that he says in a tone of pity (at least according to the Greek which puts the "you" at the end): "Then a king are *you*?" Jesus answers that the reason why he was born to be (the Messianic) king was to testify to God's teachings or truth (see 1, 14 n). Everyone who lets himself be guided by God's teachings will therefore listen to the voice of Jesus (8, 47).

18, 38: Pilate, misunderstanding Christ's explanation of truth, and being skeptical of truth as he conceives it, at least learns enough to inform the Jews of the innocence of Jesus.

18, 39: This passover custom cannot be verified by any biblical or extrabiblical source. Lk is the only one of the four evangelists who does not mention it. There is no documentary evidence that the custom began with the Machabees in the second century B.C. nor that it was established by the Romans.

19, 1-3: See par Mt 27, 27-31.

19, 1: *Scourged*: the Roman *flagrum* was most likely used. At the tip of each of the two leather thongs was a ball of lead or a small bone. The victim had to stoop down, with his hands tied to a low column.

19, 2: *Plaiting a crown of thorns*: judging from the Greek words, many experts conclude that the "crown" was really shaped like a skull-cap and had perhaps a band holding it together.

19, 3: *King of the Jews*: see 7, 35 n on Jn's use of ironical statements.

- 5 find no guilt in him." Jesus therefore came forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to 6 them, "Behold, the man!" When, therefore, the chief priests and the attendants saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves 7 and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." The Jews answered him, "We have a Law, and according to that Law he must die, because he has made himself Son of God." 8 Now when Pilate heard this statement, he feared the more. 9 And he again went back into the praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where art thou from?" But Jesus gave him no 10 answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Dost thou not speak to me? Dost thou not know that I have power to crucify 11 thee, and that I have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou wouldst have no power at all over me were it not given thee from above. Therefore, he who betrayed me to thee has the greater sin." 12 And from then on Pilate was looking for a way to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying, "If thou release this man, thou art no friend of Caesar; for everyone who makes himself king sets himself against Caesar."

19, 5: *Behold, the man*: Pilate had contempt and pity for Jesus. The evangelist's readers had divine adoration for him.

19, 6: *Attendants*: temple police. *Take him . . . crucify him*: Pilate's taunt. The Jewish death penalty was stoning, not crucifixion. *I find no guilt in him*: the third declaration of innocence (see 18, 38; 19, 4).

19, 7: *Law . . . Son of God*: according to Lv 24, 16 "whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death," and Jesus made himself equal to God. The two statements, "made himself equal to God" (5, 18); "makest thyself God" (10, 33) and "he has made himself Son of God" in this verse do not refer to blasphemy and therefore do not decide what constitutes blasphemy at Christ's trial (see Mt 26, 65 n).

19, 8: Pilate feared Christ's supernatural claim.

19, 11: *From above*: from God. The more probable meaning is: Pilate has power over Jesus only because of divine permission (10, 18). The less probable meaning is: Jesus states the general principle that the origin of state authority is ultimately God (Rom 13, 1). *He who betrayed me to thee*: The Jewish authorities (11, 53) and Caiaphas (11, 49f) are chiefly referred to, but Judas (18, 2) is not excluded. All these are more guilty than Pilate probably because they took the initiative.

19, 12: *Friend of Caesar*: this attribute means a loyal subject of Caesar. However, there is some evidence that "friend of Caesar" was a title of provincial governors. The principal accusation which succeeded in obtaining the condemnation of Jesus from Pilate was that Christ claimed to be king of the Jews. The accusers presented Christ's religious Messianic claim of kingship as a political claim. (For the minor accusations see Lk 23, 2 n.) Yet, what finally seemed to have

- 13 Pilate therefore, when he heard these words, brought Jesus outside, and sat down on the judgment-seat, at a place called
 14 Lithostrotos, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day for the Passover, about the sixth hour. And
 15 he said to the Jews, "Behold, your king!" | But they cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests
 16 answered, "We have no king but Caesar." | Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away.

made Pilate decide to deliver Jesus to his accusers was a threat tantamount to blackmail: if he refused to crucify Christ, Rome would sometime, somehow, hear from the Jews that Pilate sided with a pretentious rebel "king." See Acts 17, 7 n. *To release him*: this is the third mention of Pilate's desire to release Jesus. See 18, 38; 19, 4.

19, 13: *Sat down*: because of the ambiguity of the Greek verb, it could mean that Pilate made Jesus sit on the "judgment-seat." *Lithostrotos*: a transliteration of the Greek word for stone pavement, but not an exact rendering of *Gabbatha*, the meaning of which is disputed. It is still undecided whether the 1933 discovery of a pavement, made of blocks of stone ranging from three to six feet square in front of the Antonia, is the "Stone Pavement" mentioned in this verse. If so, then the "praetorium" (which means the governor's residence) refers to the fortress Antonia on the east side of Jerusalem. The rival opinion maintains that the usual residence of the provincial governor when visiting Jerusalem was the old palace of Herod the Great on the west side of the city, and the "praetorium" therefore refers to Herod's palace. *In Hebrew*: literally, "in Aramaic."

19, 14: *Preparation Day for the Passover*: the eve of Passover. The Passover was to begin at sunset. *Sixth hour*: noon. See Mk 15, 25 n. *The Jews*: see 1, 19 n. *Behold, your king*: see 7, 35 n on ironical statements.

19, 16: Although it must be conceded to exacting scholars that none of the four evangelists has Pilate proclaim an official sentence of condemnation, its juridical equivalent is recognizable in this verse (see Mt 27, 26 n). *To them*: from this verse and from Lk 23, 25, a reader could easily get the impression that the Jews themselves crucified Jesus, but such an interpretation would conflict with Jn 18, 31 and 19, 6. Juridically, Pilate was responsible for the condemnation and death of Christ, for Jesus was innocent of the charge made against him: that he claimed to be a *political* Messiah (see 19, 12 n). Morally, Pilate was objectively culpable of injustice because he knew that Christ was innocent. The reasons for his yielding to Christ's accusers did not justify him. Some of the reasons often suggested are: Pilate feared a riot (Mt 27, 24); he feared that the Jewish authorities would report him to Rome for not executing a dangerous political enemy (Jn 19, 12); his standing in the eyes of Rome was already precarious (see Mk 15, 1 n). Morally, Caiaphas and his high priests were objectively culpable of Christ's condemnation and death because they delivered him to Pilate. The Pharisees (see Mk 15, 3 n) were culpable insofar as their hostility to Jesus during his public life led to his execution.

**RUINS OF THE JERUSALEM
WALLS AND OF BUILDINGS
DATING FROM THE TIME
OF CHRIST
(See page 394)**

ANTONIA. The fortress of Antonia was originally built on a rock. According to one view, the Antonia was connected with the area of Herod's temple by stairways. A rival view is that the Antonia was contiguous with the north wall of Herod's temple.

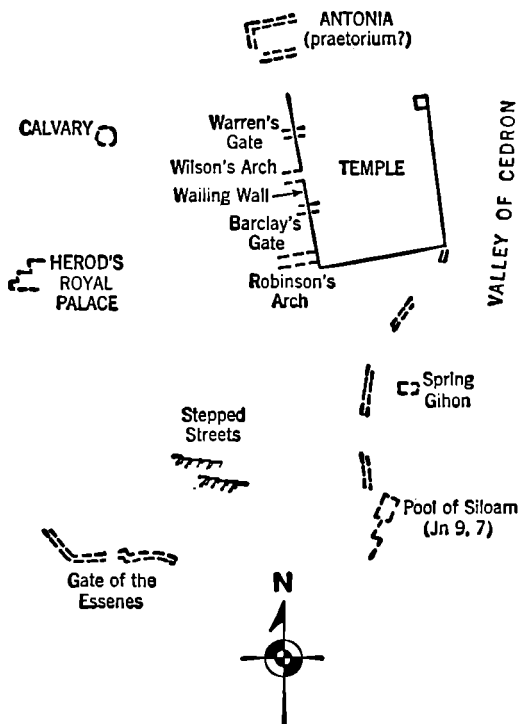
If the **praetorium** was at the Antonia, the "Way of the Cross" began there and ended at Calvary. If the **praetorium** was at Herod's royal palace, the starting point was there. On this dispute see Jn 19, 13 n.

HEROD'S ROYAL PALACE. The Roman procurators customarily resided there whenever they visited Jerusalem.

STEPPED STREETS. Since they date from the Machabean or Roman times, Jesus may have walked on these streets from the cenacle to Gethsemani after the Last Supper.

TEMPLE. In the temple area there stands today a small mosque called Dome of the Rock. The mosque dates from the seventh century A.D. It contains a sacred rock that may have been in the three temples of Solomon, Zorobabel, and Herod. Other conclusions offered by archeologists are: the temple building itself with its Holy and Holy of Holies was built over the sacred rock or near it. The entrance of Herod's temple faced eastward. The architectural style of the facade of the temple was Greek or plain oriental. Furthermore, some archeologists hold that Herod placed the golden Roman Eagle over the entrance of the temple, even though it offended the Jews.

Ruins of the Jerusalem Walls and Buildings Dating from the Time of Christ



At the west wall, authentic Herodian remains were found and named: Warren's Gate, Wilson's Arch (this arch is Herodian only according to the minority view), the wailing wall—about fifty yards of it—, Barclay's Gate, and Robinson's Arch. A part of the southeast corner of the temple wall also goes back to Herod's time. The area plan of the temple of Herod most probably did not form a perfect square. In sum, the east, south and west sides of the present temple's outline correspond with the sides of Herod's temple.

What happened to the objects that the victorious Titus brought to Rome in 70 A.D. and immortalized on his famous arch—the golden lampstand, the golden table of the loaves, the incense cups, two silver trumpets, and probably three tablets of the Law? The better opinion is that they were sunk into the Tiber about 312 A.D. and were never recovered.

- 17 *The Crucifixion* And bearing the cross for himself, he went forth to the place called the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha
- 18 | where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side and Jesus in the center.
- 19 And Pilate also wrote an inscription and had it put on the cross. And there was written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."
- 20 Many of the Jews therefore read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and
- 21 it was written in Hebrew, in Greek and in Latin. The chief priests of the Jews said therefore to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, I am the King of the
- 22 Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."
- 23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments and made of them four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam,
- 24 woven in one piece from the top. They therefore said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be." That the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, "They divided my garments among them; and for my vesture they cast lots."

These things therefore the soldiers did.

19, 17-24: See par Mt 27, 32-38.

19, 17: *Skull*: for the meaning and site see Mk 15, 22 n.

19, 19: The different wording of the inscription in each of the four Gospels reveals the working of oral tradition. The wording in Mk's Gospel may be the oldest. The purpose of the title given in the inscription was to indicate the charge (see Jn 19, 12 n). This custom is mentioned in *Caligula* by Suetonius.

19, 20: *Hebrew*: Aramaic, the language of Palestinian Jews, is meant. Greek was the international language of culture and commerce, and Latin the official language of the occupying Roman administrators.

19, 21: Pilate may have deliberately decided on, and succeeded in, insulting the Jews by writing, "The King of the Jews." The chief priests wanted to add jeeringly, "he said."

19, 22: Pilate's reply was his revenge for having been "forced" to condemn Jesus. The readers of the evangelist saw the irony of the title, for it was more true than Pilate or the Jewish priests had suspected.

19, 23-24: By Roman custom, the executioners "inherited" the clothes ("garments") of the condemned, namely, the sandals, the cloak, and the headdress. *The tunic*: the undergarment. To tear it in four pieces would destroy much of its value. On the quotation from Ps 21, 19 see Ps 21, 28-32 n.

- 25 *The Death of Jesus* Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of
 26 Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he
 27 said to his mother, "Woman, behold, thy son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, thy mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.
- 28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I
 29 thirst." Now there was standing there a vessel full of common wine; and having put a sponge soaked with the wine on
 30 a stalk of hyssop, they put it to his mouth. Therefore, when Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is consummated!" And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

- 31 *The Burial* The Jews therefore, since it was the Preparation Day, in order that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a solemn day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and

19, 25: *His mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas*: some maintain that this refers to one and the same person; others, that "his mother's sister" is Salome (Mk 15, 40), the "mother of the sons of Zebedee" (Mt 27, 56). *Mary of Cleophas*: this means "Mary the wife of Cleophas."

19, 26-27: *Woman, behold, thy son . . . Behold, thy mother*: the obvious meaning of the "third last word" is that Jesus tells John the evangelist ("the disciple . . . whom he loved") to take care of his mother henceforth. Moreover, it is a common opinion among modern Catholic scholars to understand here that Mary is John's spiritual mother, the mother who represents all Christians. The scholars explain that just as Adam "called his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living" (Gn 3, 20), so the new Adam, Christ, calls Mary the mother of all the (spiritually) living. The controversy centers on whether the spiritual motherhood is to be found in the literal, typical, or fuller sense. Other Catholic scholars do not admit the meaning of the spiritual motherhood in the text in any sense.

19, 28-30: *I thirst . . . spirit*: the fifth of the "seven last words" expresses one of the most painful tortures of the crucified (see Ps 68, 22 n).

19, 29: *Common wine*: vinegar. See Mt 27, 48 and Ps 68, 22 n.

19, 30: *It is consummated*: by the sixth of the "seven last words" Christ expresses the completion of his work.

19, 31: *Preparation Day*: see Mk 15, 42 n. *Bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath*: this request was in conformity with the law (see Dt 21, 23 n) which applied to the crucified, according to the historian Josephus. *That Sabbath was a solemn day*: because it was the first day of the passover festivities.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHRIST'S DEATH

The Gospels show that only a few Jewish leaders were morally responsible for Christ's death (see Jn 19, 16 n). Yet the sacred writers (e.g., Peter's speeches in Acts 2, 14ff) give the impression that all the Jews were responsible. But a scrutiny of the historical background will reveal more exactly what these writers meant.

In the early days after Pentecost the Christians considered themselves a Jewish sect whose Messiah had come. They thought that all they had to do was to convince their fellow Jews of the same truth. The Jews, however, looked upon the Christians as heretics who divinized a so-called resurrected man. As mutual hatred flared up more and more, neither side thought that the disagreement would be bridged by reversing a juridical error and by declaring Christ not guilty. (This popular notion came later and is still with us.) For a Christian, the mutual animosity would end only by the conversion of the Jews. For a Jew, the conflict would end only when the Christians would end their "idolatry."

Christians and Jews began to label each other "hardened sinners." Their mutual persecution made the theological differences much more real. The Christians turned to the Gentiles and gradually associated the Jewish people as a whole ("the synagogue") with the few who had been guilty of Christ's death. The Christians thought of the Jews as "sinners" just as the Jews thought of pagans as "sinners," as if the Jews were sinners by a "sin of nature."

St. Paul's inspired reflections recalled that the Jews were still the Chosen People (Rom 9—11). St. John's inspired reflections recalled in his use of the term "the Jews" that it included

not only the Incredulous Jewish leaders of Christ's day (the historical meaning—see Jn 1, 19 n) but according to some, the term meant also the incredulous people of all time (the theological meaning).

It is clear from the aforesaid that the sacred writers did not mean that the Jews of all ages inherited—comparable to an "original sin"—the guilt of Christ's death. It is also clear that the Church's liturgical use of the Passion narrative is not to focus on the historical incident but on its theological meaning as John presents it.

Simultaneously with the current in the New Testament as described above there existed another. Some Catholic scholars admit that there has been a coloring of events in such a way as to blame the Jews for the death of Christ (see Jn 18, 31 n). This coloring was intended to show the political innocence of the Christians who were then persecuted by the Romans (compare Acts 26, 32 n). The Catholic biblicists, though, do not admit a coloring to the extent of rejecting the historicity of the trials before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate.

32 that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other, who had
 33 been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs; |
 34 but one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water.

35 And he who saw it has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he tells the truth, that you also may
 36 believe. For these things came to pass that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall you break."

37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced."

38 Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, because he was a disciple of Jesus (although for fear of the Jews a secret one), besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave permission. He came, therefore, and
 39 took away the body of Jesus. And there also came Nicodemus (who at first had come to Jesus by night), bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, in weight about a hundred

19, 32: *Broke the legs*: the Roman penalty called *crurifragium* was sometimes administered independently of a crucifixion and sometimes in accompaniment with it to hasten death.

19, 34: *One of the soldiers*: the fourth century apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus calls him Longinus. *Opened his side with a lance*: it was routine for the Roman soldiers to strike the heart of the crucified to make certain of the victim's death. The blessing with the lance on Good Fridays in St. Peter's Basilica is not diminished in spite of the unauthenticity of the lance. *Blood and water*: many Fathers of the Church, followed by many modern Catholic scholars, believe that the evangelist intended the water to symbolize the Sacrament of Baptism, and the blood to symbolize the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Although many medical experts, in speaking of Christ's death, argue that the flow of blood and water was not miraculous, they dispute from which bodily organ the blood and water came. On the question of the immediate cause of Christ's death, their opinion—each supported by evidence from World War II—include traumatic shock; failure of blood circulation; suffocation.

19, 35: *And he who saw it has borne witness*: a suggested translation is: "This testimony is guaranteed by an eyewitness."

19, 36: See Ps 33, 21 n.

19, 37: See Za 12, 10 n.

19, 38-42: See par Mt 27, 57-61.

19, 38: *Pilate*: the last mention of Pilate. Christian legends, spun from the suicide story of Pilate, tell that his body was cast into the Tiber, or the Rhone, or in the Lake of Lucerne from where the Roman procurator rises every Good Friday to wash his hands.

19, 39: *Nicodemus*: see 3, 1 n. According to apocryphal writings, Nicodemus became the sculptor of the Holy Face, which is now in Lucca, Italy. *Myrrh and aloes*: sweet smelling resin and scented wood. *A hundred pounds*: seventy pounds in our system of weights.

40 pounds. They therefore took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, after the Jewish manner of preparing for burial. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. There, accordingly, because of the Preparation Day of the Jews, for the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

20

1 *Mary Magdalene* Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and she saw the stone taken away from the tomb. She ran therefore and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and they went to the tomb. The two were running together, and the other disciple ran on before, faster than Peter, and came first to the tomb. And stooping down he saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not enter. Simon Peter therefore came following him, and he went into the tomb, and saw the linen cloths lying there, | and the handkerchief which had been about his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded

19, 40: *Wrapped . . . spices*: the perfumes were sprinkled between the folds. *After the Jewish manner of preparing for burial*: the Roman manner of burial was cremation; the Egyptian manner of preparing was embalming, which required the extraction of the brains and entrails.

19, 42: *Preparation Day*: see Mk 15, 42 n.

20, 1: *Mary Magdalene . . . tomb*: according to par Mt 28, 1 there were other women with her as the use of "we" indicates ("We do not know where they have laid him" 20, 2).

20, 2: *The other disciple whom Jesus loved*: John the evangelist.

20, 5: *Yet he did not enter*: not all Catholic scholars agree that the evangelist allowed Peter to enter first because of Peter's position as leader of the apostles. There may have been other reasons.

20, 6-7: Christ may have miraculously passed through his wrappings just as he later miraculously passed through the closed doors to greet the disciples (see 20, 19 n). *Saw the linen cloths . . . a place by itself*: those who advocate the authenticity of the one-piece holy shroud of Turin, Italy, are opposed by the majority of scripture scholars. Perhaps the strongest scriptural argument against the authenticity of the shroud is v. 7 which describes "the linen cloths" separated from "the handkerchief . . . about his head." Moreover, the efforts

- 8 in a place by itself. Then the other disciple also went in, who had come first to the tomb. And he saw and believed; |
 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he
 10 must rise from the dead. The disciples therefore went away again to their home.
- 11 But Mary was standing outside weeping at the tomb. So, as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the
 12 tomb, | and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been
 13 laid. They said to her, "Woman, why art thou weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."
- 14 When she had said this she turned round and beheld Jesus standing there, and she did not know that it was Je-
 15 sus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why art thou weeping? Whom dost thou seek?" She, thinking that he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if thou hast removed him, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away."
- 16 | Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Turning, she said to him,
 17 "Rabboni!" (that is to say, Master). | Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but

to trace back the shroud of Turin to the first century encountered many serious historical gaps. Lastly, what used to be considered "miraculous" about the imprint on the shroud is now openly challenged because of the advances in science.

20, 8: *He saw and believed*: although the text clearly states that the evangelist was the first to believe in Christ's resurrection, there may be an implicit assertion (in vv. 6-7) that Peter believed in it before John. Regardless, both John and Peter believed in Christ's resurrection before Mary Magdalene, at least according to this Gospel, even though—again in the words of Jn—she *sees* him first (vv. 14-18). Since the two apostles saw the burial clothes lying there, it must have been proof to them that no physical removal of Christ's body had taken place.

20, 9: *For as yet . . . from the dead*: they did not understand the words of scripture about Christ's resurrection before this occurrence. *Scripture*: how difficult it was at the time of Christ, even for those versed in the scriptures, to understand the Old Testament "prophecies" of Christ's resurrection, may be seen from Peter's interpretation of Ps 15, 8-11 within his sermon in Acts 2, 24-31. *Rise*: literally, "rose" (see Mk 8, 13 n).

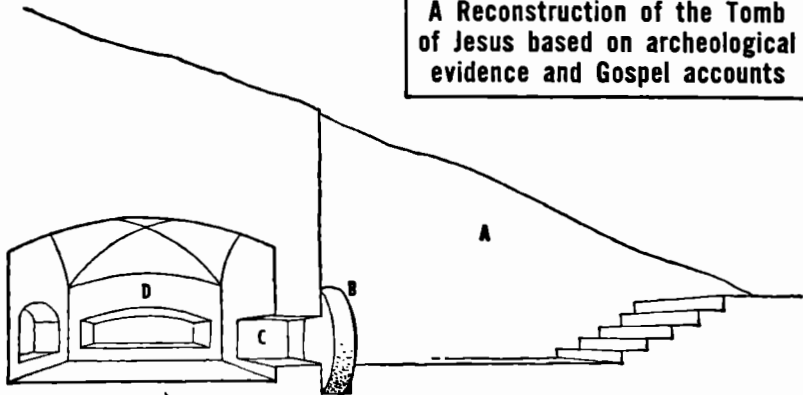
20, 11: *Saw two angels*: see Lk 24, 4 n on the discrepancies.

20, 14-18: See Mt 28, 9 n.

20, 16: *Rabboni*: see Mk 10, 51 n.

20, 17: *Do not touch me*: a more accurate translation is "do not cling" or "hold" or "delay" me. If we judge from the parallel text, Mary may have clasped his feet to express her homage (see Mt 28, 9 n). *For I have not yet ascended to my Father*: there is no fully satisfying answer to why Jesus forbids Mary's act for the reason that

A Reconstruction of the Tomb of Jesus based on archeological evidence and Gospel accounts



There were different types of tombs at the time of Christ. It is not certain of what type the tomb was wherein Jesus was buried. The most probable opinion seems to be that it was the simplest type. It consisted of an antechamber hewn out of the rock wall (A). Ordinarily, a circular stone (B) or a flat stone door closed a low doorway (C) that led into a square chamber (D). Within the three sides of the chamber, slightly above ground level, there were usually three alcoves for the deposition of a body in each alcove.

The Gospel accounts accord well with these archeological data. Joseph of Arimathea "laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock" (Mk 15, 46). In Jn 20, 5 we read that John ran to the tomb and "sloping down he saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not enter." This text must mean that the apostle entered the antechamber but did not enter the square chamber. The low entrance was closed by a rolling stone ("he rolled a stone across the entrance of the tomb," Mk 15, 46). Palestinian archeologists know of four examples of rolling stones the size of which would require a robust man for removing it. (The women asked: "Who will roll the stone back from the entrance of the tomb for us?" Mk 16, 31.)

go to my brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

- 18 Mary Magdalene came, and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord, and these things he said to me."

19 *The Disciples* When it was late that same day, the first of the week, though the doors where the disciples gathered had been closed for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the
20 midst and said to them, "Peace be to you!" And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The
21 disciples therefore rejoiced at the sight of the Lord. He therefore said to them again, "Peace be to you! As the
22 Father has sent me, I also send you." | When he had said this, he breathed upon them, and said to them, "Receive the
23 Holy Spirit; | whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

24 *Thomas* Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin,
25 was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

he has not yet ascended to the Father. *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers," but the sense is "disciples" (v. 18). *I ascend to my Father . . . God*: this text speaks of an invisible—but historical—ascension to take place on that very Easter Sunday. The disciples are not to witness it ("go . . . say to them"). If Jesus had meant his ascension of forty days hence, it would be incomprehensible why he entrusted Mary with this message when he himself was going to see the disciples on the same Easter evening (see 20, 19). On the historical and theological ascensions see Acts 1, 9-11 n.

20, 19: *Doors . . . closed . . . Jesus came*: his glorified body is not subject to physical laws.

20, 21: See 17, 17-18 n for the same idea.

20, 22-23: *Receive the Holy Spirit . . . retained*: according to the Council of Trent, this text refers to the forgiveness of sins, committed after baptism, through the Sacrament of Penance. Many Fathers of the Church rightly explain: Whereas on Easter Sunday the apostles received the power to forgive sins through the Holy Spirit, on Pentecost Sunday they received extraordinary gifts (charisms) also through the Holy Spirit for their imminent missionary activities.

20, 24: *Thomas*: only the fourth Gospel sketches the personality of Thomas.

20, 25: In this verse and in v. 27 (perhaps also in Lk 24, 39-49) lies the strongest proof that Christ's hands and feet were nailed, not tied, to the cross. This is significant because the more common Roman method of crucifying was to tie the victim to the cross. Neither scrip-

RELICS OF THE PASSION ⁽¹⁾

Relic	Scripture Text ⁽²⁾	Number of Relics ⁽³⁾	Number of locations ⁽³⁾
cross	Jn 19, 17	If all the pieces were added, they would amount to about one-third of the size of the true cross	78
title of Christ on the cross	Jn 19, 19 n ⁽⁴⁾	1	1 ⁽⁵⁾
nails	Jn 20, 25 n	20	8
crown of thorns	Jn 19, 2 n	7 (circular bands) 23 (branches) 116 ⁽⁶⁾ (individual thorns)	7 7 75
seamless garment	Jn 19, 23-24 n	2	2 (Trier, Argenteuil)
lance	Jn 19, 34 n	6 (whole lances) 4 (pieces)	6 4
Veronica's veil	Mt 9, 20 n	1	1 ⁽⁷⁾
column of flagellation	Jn 19, 1 n	5	5
holy shroud	Jn 20, 6-7 n	5	5

(1) When the Church grants indulgences in connection with relics, it does not thereby pronounce for or against their authenticity. The Church wisely realizes that these objects form a useful crutch to support devotion.

The verdict of the archeologists is that there is no proof for the authenticity of the relics of Christ and his apostles nor for any article used by them. Authenticity can positively be disproven for most of the relics. As to Helen, the mother of Constantine, all that can be proven is that she brought relics, found in the fourth century, from Palestine to Rome. This is, however, no proof that the relics are genuine.

(2) Only one of the pertinent texts is listed.

(3) It is very difficult to be exact about the number of relics and about the number of places which claim to possess the true relics.

(4) The "n" refers to the relevant annotation.

(5) If there are other alleged titles of Christ on the cross, the title in Rome is the most famous.

(6) According to another calculation there are over 700 holy thorns in the world today.

(7) If there are other alleged veils of Veronica, the veil in Rome is the most famous.

26 And after eight days, his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being closed, and
 27 stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be to you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Bring here thy finger, and see my hands and bring here thy hand, and put it into my side; and be
 28 not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said
 29 to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

30 *The Evangelist's Epilogue* Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, which are not written
 31 in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

ture nor tradition describes how Jesus was nailed to the cross. Those who hold that Jesus had to carry the crossbeam believe the executioners first nailed Christ's hands to the crossbeam and then, after the upright part with the crossbeam fastened to it, was hoisted into place, the feet were nailed. Most likely, they also used two nails for the feet, for to pierce both feet with one nail would have been anatomically improbable. The tradition of the three nails, based on symbolic reasons, originated later. Since there are no indications from scripture or tradition about the exact marks of the nails in the hands, medical experts argue anatomically. They agree, in spite of artists and stigmatists, that the nails were not driven through the palms. According to one opinion, the nails were driven in between the two rows of the wrist bones, and according to another opinion the mark is a little higher up on the wrists.

20, 27: Even though many Fathers of the Church say that Thomas actually put his finger in the wounds of Jesus, there is no way of knowing, and it is of little moment.

20, 28: *My Lord and my God*: Thomas believes that Jesus is the Messiah and that he is God incarnate. Thomas was also amazed at Christ's entering through closed doors, and at the realization of his bold stipulations (see v. 25). This is the first explicitly recorded act of faith in the divinity of the resurrected Christ. (The double title, which was said of the Roman emperor Domitian, is only an external parallel.)

20, 29: Judging from Lk 24, 41, the rest of the apostles were just as incredulous as Thomas because they also did not believe till after they saw Christ. *Blessed are . . . yet have believed*: this verse may refer to those who will believe in Christ's resurrection and his divinity on the words of the apostles (17, 20), or it may have been written from the viewpoint of the evangelist who at the time of writing knew of many converts who believed on his word as a witness.

20, 30-31: This Gospel is the only one that is embellished with a conclusion written in a literary style.

20, 30: Compare 12, 37.

20, 31: *Christ, the Son of God . . . in his name*: the evangelist wrote to deepen the faith of Christian believers in Jesus not only as

21

- ¹ *The Manifestation in Galilee* After these things, Jesus manifested himself again at the sea of Tiberias. Now he
² manifested himself in this way. There were together Simon Peter and Thomas, called the Twin, and Nathanael, from Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others
³ of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We also are going with thee." And they went out and got into the boat. And that night they
⁴ caught nothing. | But when day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Young men, have you any
⁵ fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right of the boat and you will find them." They cast therefore, and now they were unable to draw it
⁶ up for the great number of fishes. The disciple whom Jesus loved said therefore to Peter, "It is the Lord." Simon Peter

the Messia ("Christ"), but as the divine Son of God. Through this faith they are to have supernatural life in union with the person of Christ ("name" is a Hebraic way of saying "person").

21, 1-25: All scholars admit that 20, 31 concludes the Gospel and that ch. 21 is an appendix. The problem is: who added this appendix? There is no satisfactory solution. The majority of Catholics believe that the evangelist himself added it with the exception of vv. 24-25. A minority of Catholics ascribe ch. 21 to a disciple or friend who wrote it with the evangelist's approval. The peculiarities of vocabulary and style in this chapter are mentioned as one of the several reasons for attributing it to a different writer. The few non-Catholics who hold Jn as the author of the fourth Gospel say that Jn's disciple added ch. 21, including vv. 24f, after the evangelist's death. However, this appendix-chapter must have been added before the publication of the Gospel. This assertion is supported by the inclusion of ch. 21 in all the ancient manuscripts containing the fourth Gospel.

21, 1-14: For the relation between this passage and Lk 5, 1-11, see Mk 1, 16-20 n.

21, 1: *After these things*: this verse is meant to continue from 20, 29. *Sea of Tiberias*: also called Lake of Galilee and Lake of Genesareth. See Lk 5, 1 n.

21, 2: Seven of the eleven apostles are to witness Christ's appearance.

21, 4: *The disciples did not know that it was Jesus*: it is characteristic in the post-paschal apparitions of Christ related in Lk and Jn that Jesus is not recognized until after a word or gesture.

21, 5: *Young men*: literally, "children." A friendly form of address used toward people of moderate means. Although the Greek word is found in the Gospel, it is used as a form of address only here.

21, 6: Most Catholic scholars interpret the catch as a miracle or are noncommittal.

21, 7: Perhaps the evangelist ("the disciple whom Jesus loved") recognized Jesus in the catch of fish because of a previous similar

therefore, hearing that it was the Lord, girt his tunic about him, for he was stripped, and threw himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came with the boat (for they were not far from land, only about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

9 When, therefore, they had landed, they saw a fire ready, and a fish laid upon it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring here some of the fishes that you caught just now."

11 Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net onto the land full of large fishes, one hundred and fifty-three in number.

12 And though there were so many, the net was not torn. | Jesus said to them, "Come and breakfast." And none of those reclining dared ask him, "Who art thou?" knowing that it

13 was the Lord. And Jesus came and took the bread, and

14 gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he had risen from the dead.

15 *The Primacy of Peter* When, therefore, they had breakfasted, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me more than these do?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He said to him, "Feed

catch (Lk 5, 1-11). *Girt his tunic . . . the sea*: Peter hastily put on his outer garment, without which he is described as "stripped," and swam or waded to shore.

21, 8: *About two hundred cubits*: about one hundred yards.

21, 9-13: A tradition, going back only to the fourth century, points to a block of stone on the western shore of the lake near a site famous for its seven fountains in the valley of et-Tabgha.

21, 11: *One hundred and fifty-three*: there are many interpretations of this numbering, ranging from the exact number as recorded by an eyewitness to various symbolic meanings. St. Jerome is often reported to have claimed that, according to the second century Cilician poet Oppian, there are 150 species of fish, but this assertion of the poet has never been verified.

21, 12: *None of those reclining*: the better Greek reading is: "none of the disciples."

21, 14: *The third time*: the first appearance is mentioned in 20, 19-23 and the second in 20, 26-29. *After he had risen*: after he was raised. Many commentators believe that there are symbolic meanings woven into this historical narrative, but there is no agreement on the symbolism.

21, 15-17: See Mt 16, 23 n. Since the departure of Jesus from this world is imminent, he tells Peter to govern his followers. The promise, stated in Mt 16, 18, is now realized.

21, 15: *More than these*: a probable allusion to "Even though *all* shall be scandalized, yet not I" (Mk 14, 29).

-
- 16 my lambs." | He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."
- 17 A third time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, dost thou love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him for the third time, "Dost thou love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." He said to him, "Feed my sheep."
- 18 "Amen, amen, I say to thee, when thou wast young thou didst gird thyself and walk where thou wouldst. But when thou art old thou wilt stretch forth thy hands, and another
- 19 will gird thee, and lead thee where thou wouldst not." Now this he said to signify by what manner of death he should glorify God. And having spoken thus, he said to him, "Follow me."
- 20 Turning round, Peter saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who, at the supper, had leaned back upon his breast and said, "Lord, who is it that will
- 21 betray thee?" Peter therefore, seeing him, said to Jesus, "Lord,
-

21, 16: *Lambs*: in Greek, "sheep." The transition from "lambs" (v. 15) to sheep in this verse and in v. 17 has no particular significance. The omission of "more than these" in the second and third questions is probably for the sake of abbreviation and has no particular significance.

21, 17: *Peter was grieved*: many commentators hold as probable that the three questions of Jesus were meant to correspond to Peter's three denials and that, at the third question, Peter may have become aware of this insinuation. *Sheep*: in 10, 27 the same metaphor is used for Christ's followers.

21, 18: Jesus foretells Peter's martyrdom, probably in the disguise of a proverb. When a man is young, he dresses himself and goes where he wants; when old, others help him and lead him where they want. Likewise, when Peter ages, he will "stretch forth" his hands (on the crossbeam? See Lk 23, 26 n) and others will tie and lead him where he will not wish to go, i.e., to death.

21, 19: *Manner of death*: some Catholics believe this to be an allusion only to martyrdom; others say that, regardless of whether "stretch forth" your hands of v. 18 alludes to Peter's crucifixion or not, it is clear that v. 19 refers to Peter's crucifixion because it was a past event when these words were written. Irrespective of these two opinions, Peter must have at least understood that he would meet with a violent death. *Glorify God*: a martyr gives glory to God by testifying to the truth of the divine message through his martyrdom. *Follow me*: the symbolic meaning may be: follow me in death, as Jesus previously told Peter (13, 36).

21, 20: An allusion to the evangelist (see 13, 25).

21, 21: Peter asks Jesus what Jn's future will be.

22 and what of this man?" | Jesus said to him, "If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee? Do thou follow
 23 me." | This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple was not to die. But Jesus had not said to him, "He is not to die"; but rather, "If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee?"

24 *Second Epilogue* This is the disciple who bears witness concerning these things, and who has written these things, and
 25 we know that his witness is true. There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these should be written, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written. Amen.

21, 22: Jesus does not answer Peter but says in effect: even if he wishes Jn to remain alive till his second coming at the end of the world, it is no concern of Peter.

21, 23: Some Catholics say that the apostles and early Christians probably thought the evangelist was to live till Christ's second coming, but after Jn's death his disciples added this clarification.

21, 24-25: The second conclusion, written by Jn's disciples or friends. See 21, 1-25 n.

21, 24: *Who bears witness*: it does not follow that Jn was alive at this writing. The expression means: his testimony is present in the foregoing Gospel.

21, 25: This verse imitates 20, 30. Compare 1 Mc 9, 22.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

INTRODUCTION

Never has any other writer than Luke been seriously proposed as the author of Acts. The book has been attributed to Luke since 170 A.D. Beginning with the sections in the Acts where the writer uses the pronoun "We" it can be shown that the same author wrote the rest of Acts and the third Gospel as well.

Rome is generally considered to have been the place of writing, but the date of writing is disputed; the opinions usually vary from the year 64 to the eighties of the first century. As to the sources used by Luke for the composition of Acts there is no broad agreement among scholars on any specific source for all of the Acts or for parts of them. There are only hypotheses in regard to sources used for the first fifteen chapters, and to the different sources used for the rest of Acts. The broadest agreement centers on the "we" sections in 16, 10-17; 20, 5-21, 18; 27, 1-28, 16. These sections came most probably from the diary that Luke kept on his trips. He apparently incorporated the "we" passages directly into Acts without changing the "we" to "they." To explain the "we" passages in this manner, in opposition to explaining that they came from a source other than Luke, is considered a step forward in research. At any rate, the "we" passages mean that Luke personally took part in the events narrated by him.

From the exhaustive but unrewarding research on the sources there has emerged one certain truth: Luke did not write Acts in one particular period but at various times, and having written the book at different times explains Luke's style. Its main trait is variety. Luke switches from a polished style to barbarous Greek, and from a Septuagintal style of Greek to a literal Greek as if he were translating an Aramaic document. To understand his Greek, scholars sometimes have to retranslate it into Aramaic. The first fifteen chapters are slow-moving. They breathe a marked Semitic flavor. The rest of Acts, describing Paul's journeys, are narrated with a flair.

The literary form of Acts is that of a travelogue. This is evident in all of Acts and particularly in 1, 8 wherein our Lord's words outline the geographical framework of Luke's account. "You shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth." Instead of describing the missionary activities of the apostles within an historical-chronological framework, as a modern historian would do, Luke keeps within a geographical framework. The literary form of travelogue was common to the Hellenistic historians of Luke's day. Beginning with Jerusalem, the cradle of the Church, he describes its spreading in Judea, southern Palestine. He sweeps through Samaria in northern Palestine and continues through Syria, with Antioch its capital and first great Gentile center.

After Paul's journeys throughout the Mediterranean world, the story of the travel ends in Rome. In spite of the book's title, the acts or activities of the apostles, it is not a description of the work of the twelve apostles, but mostly of Peter's activities in the first half, and of Paul's in the second half. It must be stated, in fairness to Luke, that his pen most probably never wrote the title.

Since Luke is the author of one work in two volumes, it is legitimate to point to the prologue of his first opus, the third Gospel, for a clarification of his purpose. Luke states therein that his history is based upon the testimony of eyewitnesses and that he "carefully" drew up "an orderly account" (Lk 1, 3). However, the historical narrative is not a complete account like a modern history, for Luke omits to record the historic origin of the Christian church in Damascus, in Palestinian cities as Joppa, and of the church in Africa, especially Egypt. He also omits the later events in Peter's and John's activities, and he does not tell us who introduced the Christian message in Rome. In spite of these omissions, both works, the third Gospel and Acts, have been happily labeled the first history of Christian origins. In his second opus, Luke studies thirty to forty years of Church history. This spans the period between Ascension Thursday and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Luke shows how the first Christians gradually asserted their independence from the Jews. Historically, the early Christians appear as just another Jewish sect since they are referred to as the "Way" (Acts 9, 2). It is significant that they were first called Christians in a Gentile city, Antioch of Syria, not in a Jewish city (Acts 11, 26). Yet all through the Acts it is shown that the early Christians continued to frequent the temple (for many religious observances) and to observe the Mosaic Law as they did before their conversion. Even Paul, after his last missionary journey, offered sacrifice in the temple.

Although Luke intended to write true history, scholars ask: Did he do so? This questioning the historicity of Acts, namely, the movement to deny the historical reliability of Acts, originated in 1841. Since then there has been a marked shift of opinion in favor of the historicity of Acts. Yet, the Acts are often attacked insofar as only the "we" passages are judged to be historical.

Just what type of history has Luke written? True, he cannot be compared favorably with the famous ancient Greek and Roman historians before and during his time, such as Thucydides, Polybius, and Tacitus. These men wrote secular history; Luke wrote religious history as did all biblical historians in varying degrees. Luke's *religious* history is borne out by the fact that Acts is *the* book of the New Testament which best illustrates the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost and bestows his charismatic gifts that are seen in operation in numerous members of the Church for many years. The Holy Spirit directs Paul on his journeys. In addition, Acts does have some value as secular history. Since indication of dates and places is important in the writing of history, where do we find this in Acts? In the "we" sections; and, where Luke is speaking as

an eyewitness, he is more exact, graphic, and detailed. The nearer he is to the events related, the greater becomes the value of his account. In fact, the second part of Acts is more exact than the first. In the first part there is only one date given (11, 26). Further on, from the death of Stephen (7, 60) to the council at Jerusalem (15, 22-35), it is difficult to follow the events chronologically. The events described in chs. 1—15 extend over a period of about twenty years. Figures given in Gal 1, 18; 2, 1 help us make this estimate. In the second half of Acts, after the Council of Jerusalem, there are more precise chronological data. For example, Paul is said to have remained a year and a half in Corinth (18, 11); two years and a quarter in Ephesus (19, 8-10); again three years in Ephesus (20, 31); two years in Caesarea (24, 27); two years in Rome (28, 30). All this information affords a more accurate chronology of the period after the apostolic council. Therefore, the second part is of a higher historical value than the first.

From Acts we can fill in many of the gaps in Paul's Epistles, such as the routes of Paul's missionary journeys, the places where he preached, and also his trial before the court of the governor. Although there are certain divergences between Acts and the Epistles, most of Paul's activities as recorded in Acts are confirmed by the Epistles.

Outside of the Bible, the reliability of Acts is verified through extra-biblical evidence about persons, events, geographical details, and cultural and religious institutions. Only in a few cases are there discrepancies between Acts and secular history.

Within the larger question of the historical reliability of Acts there arises the smaller but constantly perplexing question of the historical reliability of the eight speeches of Peter and the nine of Paul. Many scholars grant that Luke occasionally inserts these speeches to summarize the events of an historical period. The problem, however is: has Luke made up these summary speeches in free composition or, if not, to what degree has he based them on traditions? Or do they represent the very words of Peter and Paul? Some scholars believe that Luke used a free compositional style, similar to the Greco-Roman historians of his day who freely composed speeches suitable to the persons concerned. The speeches represented what the persons would have said under certain circumstances. This literary device helped the readers to understand the meaning of the events. Other scholars claim that Luke's speeches are substantially based on tradition, written or oral. Ranging between these two opinions are several others. Hardly any scholar judges the speeches, however, as literal reports of what Peter and Paul said.

The influence of Acts from the second through the fourth century made itself felt in an overproduction of apocryphal books on the acts, uses Luke's Acts in the Masses of the feasts of Easter, Ascension, and such as those of Peter, Paul, John, Andrew, and others. The liturgy especially Pentecost, and in a number of feasts of saints. Religious art was influenced by various apocryphal acts, principally the acts of Paul

and Thecla. Even in modern times we may get proof of the influence of Luke's Acts by hearing Mendelssohn's oratorio on St. Paul.

Main divisions of the Acts of the Apostles are:

1. Prelude, 1, 1-26
2. Church in Jerusalem, 2, 1—8, 3
3. Church in Judea and Samaria, 8, 4—9, 43
4. Church among the Gentiles, 10—12
5. First Missionary Journey, 13, 1—15, 35
6. Second Missionary Journey, 15, 36—18, 22
7. Third Missionary Journey, 18, 23—21, 16
8. Paul's Imprisonment in Palestine, 21, 17—26, 32
9. Paul's Imprisonment in Rome, 27—28

PRELUDE

1

- 1 *The Ascension* In the former book, O Theophilus, I spoke of all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning
2 |until the day on which he was taken up, after he had given commandments through the Holy Spirit to the apos-
3 tles whom he had chosen. To them also he showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, during forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God.
4 And while eating with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, "of which you have heard," said he, "by my
5 mouth; | for John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."
6 They therefore who had come together began to ask him, saying, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
7 But he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or dates which the Father has fixed by his own au-

1, 1-5: These verses constitute a secondary prologue to Lk's two volume work, the Gospel and the Acts. This prologue as well as the other (Lk 1, 1-4) are modeled after classical prologues, according to which the second prologue always briefly summarizes the first volume. Thus the prologue to Acts briefly summarizes the events recorded in Lk's Gospel.

1, 1: *The former book*: the Gospel of Lk. *Theophilus*: see Lk 1, 1-4 n.

1, 2: *He was taken up*: see v. 9. *Given commandments*: a reference to the command to baptize all nations (Mt 28, 19f). *The Holy Spirit*: since Lk frequently mentions that the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, some commentators call Acts "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit."

1, 3: *Forty days*: the Bible often uses forty as a round number (see 1, 9-11 n). *Speaking of the kingdom of God*: this was Christ's central doctrine before his resurrection and it remained that of the apostles.

1, 4: The meal may refer to the appearance of Jesus to the apostles (see Lk 24, 42f). *The promise*: the Holy Spirit. *Of which you have heard*: a reference to the instructions given by Jesus (Lk 24, 42-49).

1, 5: A reference to Pentecost. See Mt 3, 11-12 n.

1, 6: The apostles still thought of a political Messianic kingdom (see Lk 19, 11 and Mt 20, 21).

1, 7: It was not for the apostles to know when the Father will re-establish the true spiritual kingdom at the end of the world.

- 8 **thority; | but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth."**
- 9 **And when he had said this, he was lifted up before**
- 10 **their eyes, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing up to heaven as he went, behold,**
- 11 **two men stood by them in white garments, | and said to them, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to**

1, 8: *You shall be witnesses*: the nature of the apostles' mission was to be witnesses throughout the world for Christ—his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. (See Introduction to Acts on the literary form of travelogue.)

1, 9-11: The common opinion about the ascension has been that after his resurrection Jesus remained on earth for forty days, and only once ascended into heaven at the end of those forty days. The new opinion rightly claims that, besides the one visible historical ascension after forty days, Jesus ascended into heaven invisibly many times before that fortieth day.

A tradition is detected from many passages that narrate the resurrection of Christ and his being exalted into glory, but these passages presuppose the visible ascension (e.g., 1 Thes 1, 10). A *second* tradition affirms the ascension as a theological fact (e.g., Acts 5, 31: "him God has exalted to (not 'with') his right hand"). A *third* tradition states that the ascension is an historical fact, because of an eyewitness account (Acts 1, 9-11), and at all other times because of the indications of time and place of the ascension, in spite of variations in date. Acts 1, 3 puts forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, whereas Luke in his Gospel seems to place the resurrection and ascension on the same Easter day (see Lk 24, 50-53 n). See also Jn 20, 17 n which explains that Christ ascended invisibly into heaven on Easter.

There are two aspects of the ascension: the visible departure from this world (the historical ascension) and the invisible arrival in the other world (the theological ascension). The second aspect is the object of faith and the essential part of the mystery of the ascension. The first and second traditions did not mention the historical ascension because it was not considered essential to the mystery. The new opinion, however, holds that Christ ascended into heaven on Easter and interrupted his stay there to appear on earth from time to time till his last appearance on Mount Olivet.

1, 10-11: *Two men . . . in white garments*: a comparison with the description of the "two men" at the empty grave led scholars to deduce that Acts speak of *two angels* here (see Lk 24, 4 par). Jesus will return in "a cloud" (v. 9) at the end of the world "in the same way" (v. 11) as he ascended. The cloud is not meant literally. The expression forms part of the customary literary embroidery when the appearance of God is narrated. Many believe that this description originated from Dn 7, 13. See, e.g., Ex 13, 21-22 n and Mt 17, 5 on the transfiguration.

1, 11: The verse is used in the Introit of the Mass on Ascension Thursday.

heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall come in the same way as you have seen him going up to heaven."

- 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.
13 And when they had entered the city, they mounted to the upper room where were staying Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon the Zealot, and Jude
14 the brother of James. All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

- 15 *Matthias Chosen* In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (now the number of persons met together was about a hundred and twenty), and he said,
16 "Brethren, the Scripture must be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit declared before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the guide of those who arrested Jesus;
17 | inasmuch as he had been numbered among us and was
18 allotted his share in this ministry. And he indeed bought a field with the price of his iniquity and, being hanged, burst
19 asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field came to be called in their language Haceldama, that is,
20 the Field of Blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let their habitation become desolate and let there be none to dwell in it.' And, 'His ministry let another take.'

1, 12: *A Sabbath day's journey*: about two-thirds of a mile. It was permitted to a Jew to travel that distance during the Sabbath rest.

1, 13: *The upper room*: it is an open question whether this is the same room as the cenacle where the Last Supper was held (see Mk 14, 15 par) or the house of Mark's mother (12, 12) or the scene of Pentecost (2, 1-2). On the list of the apostles see table, p. 157.

1, 14: *His brethren*: see Mt 13, 55-56 n.

1, 15: *In those days*: the days between ascension and Pentecost. *A hundred and twenty*: see 1, 13 n. The opinion cannot be supported that Lk mentioned this number because in Jewish law 120 persons were considered sufficient to form a legally recognized community.

1, 16: The Psalter as a whole is attributed to David. (See Introduction to the Psalms, Vol 1, p. 939.)

1, 18-19: See Mt 27, 3-10 n for the different accounts of the death of Judas.

1, 18: Peter reinterprets Pss 68, 26 and 108, 8 almost as if they had foretold the apostasy of Judas.

- 21 "Therefore, of these men who have been in our company all the time that the Lord Jesus moved among us
 22 | from John's baptism until the day that he was taken up from us, of these one must become a witness with us of his resurrection."
 23 And they put forward two: Joseph, called Barsabbas
 24 who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, show
 25 which of these two thou hast chosen | to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away to go to his own place."
 26 And they drew lots between them, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1. THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE AND SYRIA

I. GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

2

- 1 *Descent of the Holy Spirit* And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together

1, 21-22: The two requirements were the witnessing to the whole public life of Christ and to the resurrection of Christ.

1, 23: Nothing certain is known from scripture and tradition about these two men.

1, 24: The prayer seems addressed not to the Father but to Jesus who chose the apostles (1, 2).

1, 25-26: *His own place*: this is not an insinuation of hell but a Semitic euphemism for "he died." There is no mention of an ordination by the laying on of hands. *They drew lots*: they probably put stones with names written on them into a container and shook it until one stone fell out.

1, 26: The apostles insisted on a full complement of twelve, probably because they thought of the twelve thrones to be filled in the political Messianic kingdom (1, 6). Yet, after the death of James the Apostle (see 12, 2-3 n), they did not replace him, probably because Pentecost had spiritualized their political view of the Messianic kingdom.

2, 1: *Days*: although the Greek text says "day," the sense is that the fifty-day period ("days of Pentecost") after Easter was ending. It was not the fiftieth day, Pentecost day, which was "drawing to a close." This interpretation is confirmed by "for it is only the third hour of the day" (v. 15). Pentecost day was the Jewish thanksgiving day for the wheat harvest (Ex 23, 16), but gradually it developed into an anniversary celebration of the reception of the Law by Moses

2 in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind blowing, and it filled the
 3 whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each
 4 of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak.

5 Now there were staying at Jerusalem devout Jews from
 6 every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude gathered and were bewildered in

on Mount Sinai. The Jews who spoke Greek used the term Pentecost; the Jews who spoke Aramaic used the term Feast of Weeks. Pentecost was one of the three days prescribed for the visiting of the temple. *In one place*: see 1, 13 n.

2, 2-3: The descent of the Holy Spirit was accompanied not by a wind but by a sound resembling the sound of a wind ("as of a violent wind"). At the same time there appeared something resembling fiery tongues, but they were not of fire ("as of fire"). The sound and tongues were perceptible for only a brief time and perhaps by the twelve only, as is probably indicated by the expression "the Eleven" (2, 14) rather than by "120" (1, 15).

2, 4-13: Scholars agree that the miracle on Pentecost was not one of *bearing*. This means: when the apostles spoke Aramaic, the miracle was not that the apostles' words were heard by every listener in his own native language. To *speak in foreign tongues* (2, 4): the more common opinion is that at Pentecost the apostles spoke in foreign languages and not in ecstasy (which is the gift of tongues). See 1 Cor 14, 2 n. This more common opinion is implied in the literal Greek "to speak *other* tongues." However, the translation of "other" into "foreign" in this context is warranted, because the Jews from abroad observe that, although the apostles are Galileans (2, 7), they speak the languages of the Diaspora (2, 11). Each apostle, apparently, spoke only the one foreign language which those gathered around him understood. *They are full of new wine* (2, 13): this mockery does not necessarily mean that the apostles spoke ecstatically, i.e., that they enjoyed the gift of tongues. To mockingly accuse them of intoxication may indicate the great enthusiasm displayed by the apostles in their speeches, or it may indicate that, though the apostles did *not* speak certain languages, the listeners jeered because they thought to have heard certain languages rather poorly spoken by the apostles.

Luke himself distinguishes between "to speak in tongues," which means to speak in ecstasy (see Acts 10, 46; 19, 6) and "to speak other tongues," which means to speak in "foreign" tongues as at Pentecost (see Acts 2, 4).

Without accepting the radical opinion that the Pentecost event never happened but is to be considered as purely symbolic, there is still room for symbolism in the common opinion referred to above, namely: the speaking in foreign tongues symbolized the universality of the Church.

2, 6: It is an open question whether the multitude gathered because they heard the "sound from heaven" (v. 2) or "because each heard them speaking in his own language."

mind, because each heard them speaking in his own language. But they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, "Behold, are not all these that are speaking Galileans? And how have we heard each his own language in which he was born? | Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, | Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, | Jews also and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we have heard them speaking in our own languages of the wonderful works of God."

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others said in mockery, "They are full of new wine."

14 *Peter's Discourse* But Peter, standing up with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them: "Men of Judea and all you who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. These men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

2, 7-12: Many people in Jerusalem were permanent citizens who originally came from different countries abroad, and there were others from abroad who came only for the feast.

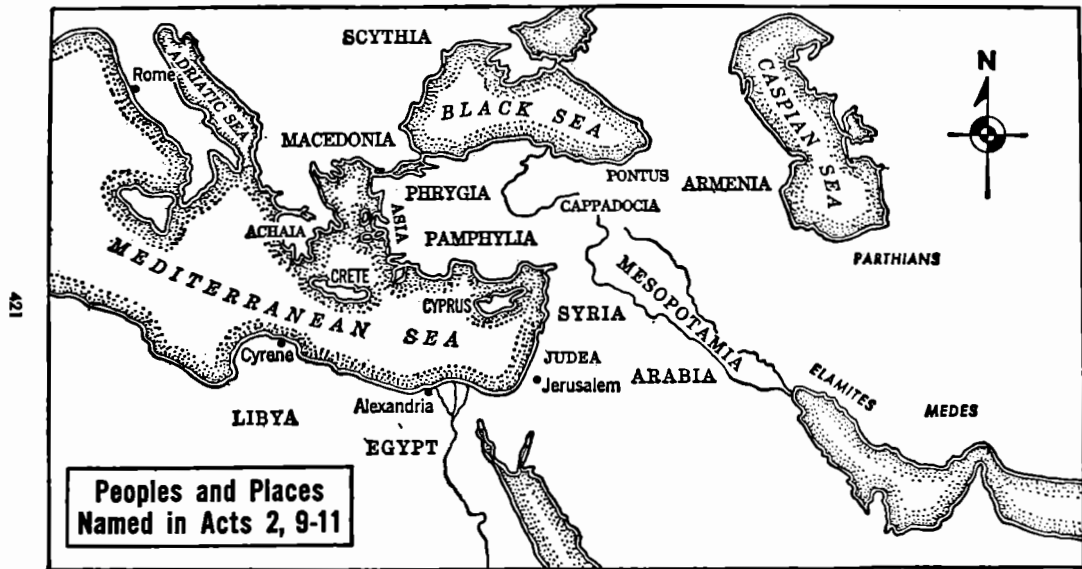
The list is meant as a general description of the Jewish settlements abroad. There were perhaps some Jewish settlements which did not send representatives, but it would seem more certain that representatives of some Jewish settlements not mentioned in the list as, for instance, Syria, Macedonia, Achaia, were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost. The list runs from east to west, barring the discrepant "Cretans and Arabs." About fifteen geographical names are listed.

2, 9: *Judea*: there is no satisfactory answer to the question why Judea appears here between Mesopotamia and Cappadocia. *Asia*: see 16, 6 n.

2, 11: *Proselytes*: full-fledged converts who observed the entire Mosaic Law including circumcision. A partial convert was called a "God-fearer," or "worshiper" (of God) or "pious." He followed part of the Mosaic Law and was not circumcised. Although the extent of the observance of the Mosaic Law may have varied from place to place, the Sabbath, the temple tax ordinance, and the important dietary laws seem to have been observed in general by the partial converts. Outside of Palestine, more of the partial converts seem to have become converted to Christianity than Jews or pagans. *The wonderful works of God*: salvation through Jesus Christ.

2, 13: See 2, 4-13 n. *New wine*: sweet wine or must.

2, 15: *The third hour*: 9 A.M. From dawn to dusk the day was divided into twelve "hours." See 2, 1 n.



"Now there were staying at Jerusalem devout Jews from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2,5).

- 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream
- 18 dreams. And moreover upon my servants and upon my handmaids in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit,
- 19 and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth beneath, blood and
- 20 fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the
- 21 Lord comes, the great and manifest day. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'
- 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved by God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did through him in the
- 23 midst of you, as you yourselves know. Him, when delivered up by the settled purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have crucified and slain by the hands of wicked
- 24 men. But God has raised him up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, because it was not possible that he should be held
- 25 fast by it. For David says with reference to him, 'I saw the Lord before me always, because he is at my right hand,

2, 17-21: see J1 3, 1-5 n and 3, 3-4 n. Peter's message is that the Messianic age has begun. He says that "this" (v. 16) outpouring of God's Spirit (v. 17), described in vv. 4-13, has in the Messianic age ("in the last days," v. 17) fallen upon all men ("all flesh") without distinction of sex ("your sons and your daughters"), age ("young men . . . old men") or social classes ("servants . . . handmaids"). They all will "prophesy," i.e., speak about God.

2, 22-26: Peter, strengthened by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost in the understanding of Christ's resurrection and of God's plan of salvation outlined in the Old Testament, reinterprets the Old Testament promises in Pss 15, 8-11 and 109, 1 as fulfilled in Christ.

2, 23: *You have crucified and slain by the hands of wicked men:* this first of a series of accusations in Acts does not extend to more Jews than the few as explained in Mt 27, 25 n.

2, 24: *(God) loosed the sorrows of hell:* God raised Jesus from the dead.

2, 25-28: This quotation is from Ps 15, 8-11 of the Greek (Sep.), not of the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew text expresses only joy at escape from death. See Ps 15, 10 n and 11. The Hebrew text reads literally: "nor will you suffer your faithful one to see the pit" ("to see the pit" is better than "undergo corruption" as it is sometimes rendered (from the Greek) in Ps 15, 10). Peter, in referring to Christ (vv. 27, 31), uses an expression equivalent to corruption ("decay") since Christ's body did not decay but arose from the dead.

2, 25: *David:* the scriptural argument is true here, even if the author were not David (see 1, 16 n and 2, 29-31 n).

- 26 lest I be moved. This is why my heart has made merry and
my tongue has rejoiced; moreover my flesh also will rest
27 in hope, | because thou wilt not abandon my soul to hell,
28 neither wilt thou let thy Holy One undergo decay. Thou hast
made known to me the ways of life; thou wilt fill me with
joy in thy presence.'
- 29 "Brethren, let me say to you freely of the patriarch
David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb
30 is with us to this very day. Therefore, since he was a
prophet and knew that God 'had sworn to him with an
oath that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon
31 his throne,' | he, foreseeing it, spoke of the resurrection
of the Christ. For neither was he abandoned to hell, nor
32 did his flesh undergo decay. This Jesus God has raised up,
33 and we are all witnesses of it. Therefore, exalted by the
right hand of God, and receiving from the Father the
promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this Spirit
34 which you see and hear. For David did not ascend into
heaven, but he says himself, 'The Lord said to my Lord:
35 Sit thou at my right hand, | until I make thy enemies thy
footstool.'
- 36 "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know most as-
suredly that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus
whom you crucified."

2, 29-31: Peter argues: since David (or the unknown Psalmist) died, the prophecy could not refer to David himself but to a descendant of David—Christ whom God resurrected from the dead.

2, 30: See 2 Sm 7, 8-16 n.

2, 32-33: This is an example of expounding the ascension as a theological fact (see 1, 9-11 n).

2, 33: In this trinitarian verse there is a very early revelation of the Spirit described not as a power but as the Third Person of the Trinity. *Exalted by (or at) the right hand of God*: this unity in operation—Christ ruling with the Father—reveals the divinity of Christ in Semitic thought patterns. In accordance with western Greek thought patterns, we hold Christ's unity with the Father as one of *nature*. V. 36 does not mean that Christ was not God before the ascension, but that God the Father took the initiative, as it were, to effect this unity in operation.

2, 34-35: Ps 109, 1 is quoted from the Greek (Sep.).

2, 34: *The Lord said to my Lord*: see Ps 109, 1 n and 109, 1-7 n.

2, 36: *God has made both Lord and Christ*: God made "Christ" through his resurrection both God and the Messiah (see 2, 33 n).

Some Catholics prefer this attitude toward the problem of the authenticity of Peter's speeches: whether they are substantially Peter's words is not as important as is the fact that they represent the preaching (*kerygma*) of the early Church in Jerusalem. (See authenticity of speeches in the Introduction to Acts.)

- 37 *The Result* Now on hearing this they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"
- 38 But Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children and to all who are far off, even to all whom the Lord our God calls to himself."
- 40 And with very many other words he bore witness, and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this perverse generation."
- 41 Now they who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- 42 *Fervor of the Early Church* And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion
- 43 of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; many wonders also and signs were done by means of the apostles in Jerusalem, and great fear
- 44 came upon all. And all who believed were together and held
- 45 all things in common, | and would sell their possessions and goods and distribute them among all according as anyone

2, 38: *Repent*: this is the same repentance as preached by John the Baptist (see Mt 3, 2 n). *In the name of Jesus Christ*: see Mt 28, 19 n.

2, 39: *The promise*: a reference to the promise that God made to Abraham and renewed throughout the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit is one of the most important Messianic promises. *To all who are far off*: the conversion of the Gentiles was foretold in the Old Testament (see Is 2, 2-4 n). The Jews will have the privilege of receiving the good news of Christ's religion before the Gentiles.

2, 42-47: This is one of the three "summaries" in Acts. The other two are 4, 32-35 and 5, 12-16. Their common features are: the apostles teach (see 2, 42 n); and work miracles (v. 43); the faithful publicly frequent the temple, but privately celebrate the Holy Eucharist at home (v. 46); they live a joyful, limited common life (see 2, 42 n); the number of the faithful increases (v. 47). These descriptive summaries of the infant Church are meant to indicate different periods in different narrative parts of Acts.

2, 42: *Teaching*: the Greek word is *didache*, which is often used in contrast with *kerygma*, ("preaching"). The content matter of the *kerygma* is the announcement of the Gospel, i.e., of the words and deeds of Jesus. This announcement is best exemplified in the synoptic Gospels. The content matter of the *didache* is the advanced teaching of the *kerygma* best exemplified in the New Testament Epistles. The content matter often overlaps in the preaching and teaching. *In the communion of the breaking of the bread*: literally, "in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread." The first phrase refers to the harmonious,

46 had need. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they took their
47 food with gladness and simplicity of heart, | praising God and being in favor with all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their company such as were to be saved.

3

1 *A Lame Beggar* Now Peter and John were going up into
2 the temple at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who had been lame from his mother's womb, was being carried by, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful, that he might ask alms of those
3 going into the temple. And he, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for an alms. But Peter,
4 gazing upon him with John, said, "Look at us." And he looked at them earnestly, hoping to receive something from
5 them. But Peter said, "Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, that I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk."
7 And taking him by the right hand, he raised him up,
8 and immediately his feet and ankles became strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and went with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising
9 God. And all the people saw him walking and praising
10 God. And they recognized him as the man who used to sit for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

common life whose main characteristic was not communism. Each owned his own goods but was ready to share them with anyone who was in need (see v. 45). A stricter form of communism was practiced by the Essenes who left us the Dead Sea Scrolls. The words "in the breaking of the bread" (as in v. 46) in themselves may mean a Jewish repast but in a Christian context they meant the Eucharistic repast. It seems that the common life was a prerequisite for partaking in the Eucharistic celebration. *The prayers*: a reference to specific prayers.

2, 46: *They took their food*: ordinary meals, not Eucharistic meals.

3, 1-11: There is no indication of how long after Pentecost this miracle took place. Just as the evangelists in their Gospels described only some of the miracles of Jesus, so does Lk here describe only some of the miracles of the apostles.

3, 1: *The ninth hour*: about 3 P.M. The second of two daily holocausts were then offered, according to Nm 28, 3-4.

3, 6: *In the name of*: by the authority of.

- 11 Now as he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran to them in the portico called Solomon's, greatly wondering.
- 12 *Peter's Discourse* But when Peter saw it, he said to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by any power or holiness of
- 13 our own we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and disowned before the face of Pilate, when
- 14 he had decided that he should be released. But you disowned the Holy and Just One, and asked that a murderer
- 15 should be granted to you; | but the author of life you killed, whom God has raised up from the dead; whereof we are
- 16 witnesses. And it is his name, by means of faith in his name, that has made strong this man whom you behold and recognize; moreover it is the faith that comes through Jesus that has given him the perfect health you all see.
- 17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But in this way God fulfilled what he had announced beforehand by the mouth of all
- 18 the prophets, namely, that his Christ should suffer. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted
- 20 out | in order that, when the times of refreshment shall

3, 12-26: By the use of words found in the Greek text of Isaia, Lk may have alluded enough to the suffering servant of Isaia (see Is 52, 13—53, 12) to justify the opinion that his indirect message here is: Jesus fulfilled the role of Isaia's servant. The allusions are: 1. "God . . . has glorified his son" (v. 13). Luke's Greek word for son is *pais*, which can also mean *servant* depending on the context. 2. ". . . whom you indeed delivered up" (v. 13). 3. The *Just One* (v. 14). 4. "suffer" (v. 18). 5. "Son" or Servant (v. 26).

3, 13: *Whom you indeed delivered up and disowned before the face of Pilate*: for this accusation and the one made in v. 17, see 2, 23 n. *When he had decided that he should be released*: this is one of the most lenient biblical statements on exculpating Pilate (see Jn 19, 16 n).

3, 15: *The author of life you killed*: this expression may mean "you killed the one who brings life-giving doctrine" (see Lk 23, 34 n). It is the strongest text, though, which might be construed to mean that the Jews committed deicide.

3, 16: *His name . . . his name*: Hebraic idiom for Christ's person.

3, 18: Only after Pentecost was this message of the prophets clearly understood.

3, 20: *In order that*, etc.: in Greek "in order that times of refreshment may come from the presence of the Lord and he may send the Messia appointed beforehand for you, Jesus." The notion that repentance will hasten the final coming of Christ is also found in 2 Pt 3, 9. *Refreshment*: a synonym for "restoration" (v. 21).

- come from the presence of the Lord, he may send him
 21 who has been preached to you, Jesus Christ. For heaven
 indeed must receive him until the times of the restoration
 of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of
 22 his holy prophets who have been from of old. For Moses
 said, 'The Lord your God shall raise up to you a prophet
 from among your brethren, as he raised up me; to him
 you shall hearken in all things that he shall speak to you.
 23 And it shall be that every soul that will not hearken to
 that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.
 24 "And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel on-
 25 wards, have also announced these days. You are the children
 of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with
 your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in thy offspring shall
 all the families of the earth be blessed.'
 26 "To you first God, raising up his Son, has sent him to bless
 you, that everyone may turn from his wickedness."

4

- 1 *Arrest and Release of Peter and John* Now while they
 were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer of
 2 the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, | being
 grieved because they were teaching the people and pro-
 claiming in the case of Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
 3 And they set hands upon them and placed them in custody
 4 till the next day; for it was already evening. But many
 of those who had heard the word believed, and the
 number of the men came to be five thousand.
 5 Now it came to pass on the morrow that their rulers and
 6 elders and Scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem | with
 Annas, the high priest, and Caiphas and John and Alex-

3, 21: Christ will remain in heaven until "the restoration of all things" into the kingdom by Jesus at his final coming. "Of which" restoration "God has spoken" through the prophet. *His holy prophets*: see v. 24. Only after Pentecost is it clear that the conclusion of the prophets' messages was to lead to Christ's kingdom at the end of the world.

3, 22-23: See Dt 18, 15-20 n.

3, 25: See Gn 12, 3 n.

3, 26: See 2, 39 n.

4, 1: *The priests*: probably those on duty for the week in the temple. *Officer of the temple*: the priest in charge of the priests and Levites who guarded the temple.

4, 2-3: The Sadducees objected to both, the apostles' assumption of the authority to teach and the doctrine of the resurrection (see 23, 8).

4, 6: *Annas, the high priest, and Caiphas*: Caiphas was officially the high priest, but since Annas, his father-in-law, was the power behind

- ander and as many as belonged to the high-priestly family.
 7 And setting them in the midst, they began to inquire, "By what authority or in what name have you done this?"
 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,
 9 "Rulers of the people and elders, | if we are on trial today about a good work done to a cripple, as to how this man
 10 has been cured, be it known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God has raised from the dead, even in this name does he stand here before you, sound.
 11 This is 'The stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the corner stone.'
 12 "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."
 13 Now seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and finding that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they began to marvel, and to recognize them as having been with
 14 Jesus. And seeing the man who had been cured standing
 15 with them, they could say nothing in reply. So they ordered them to withdraw from the council chamber; and they
 16 conferred together, | saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that indeed an evident miracle has been done by them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
 17 and we cannot deny it. But lest it spread further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more about this
 18 name to any man." And summoning them, they charged them not to speak or to teach at all in the name of Jesus.
 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather
 20 than to God, decide for yourselves. For we cannot but
 21 speak of what we have seen and heard." But they, after threatening them, let them go, not finding any way of punishing them, because of the people; for all were glorifying what had come to pass. For the man upon whom this miraculous cure had been done was more than forty years old.

23 *Thanksgiving* Now after their dismissal, they came to

the throne, Luke calls Annas "the high priest." (See Jn 18, 13 n.)
John and Alexander: nothing is known of them.

4, 10: *Whom you crucified*: see 2, 23 n.

4, 11: The psalmist called Israel the "corner stone" but Peter, in the light of Pentecost, calls Christ the corner stone (see Ps 117, 22 n.).

4, 13: *Ordinary men*: not public officials of any type.

their companions and reported all that the chief priests
 24 and the elders had said to them. But they, when they
 heard it, lifted up their voice with one accord to God and
 said, "Lord, it is thou who didst make heaven and earth and
 25 the sea and all that is in them, | who didst say by the Holy
 Spirit through the mouth of our father David, thy servant,
 'Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples plan vain
 26 things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers
 assembled together against the Lord and against his Christ.'
 27 "For of a truth there assembled together in this city against
 thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod
 and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the peoples of
 28 Israel, | to do what thy hand and thy counsel decreed to
 29 be done. And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and
 grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all bold-
 30 ness, | while thou stretchest forth thy hand to cures and
 signs and wonders to be wrought by the name of thy holy
 servant Jesus."
 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had
 assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the
 Holy Spirit, and spoke the word of God with boldness.

32 *Manner of Life of Christians* Now the multitude of the
 believers were of one heart and one soul, and not one of them
 said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had
 33 all things in common. And with great power the apostles
 gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord;
 34 and great grace was in them all. Nor was there anyone
 among them in want. For those who owned lands or houses

4, 24: *Lord*: in Greek, "*despota*." It expresses God as creator more powerfully than "*Kyrie*." *It is thou . . . in them*: the prayer comes from Ex 20, 11 and Ps 145, 6.

4, 25-27: Ps 2, 1-2 is reinterpreted in v. 27 to signify Christ. *David*: see 2, 25 n. For the original meaning of the Psalm see Ps 2, 1-12 n.

4, 27: *The Gentiles*: Pilate's pagan soldiers. *The peoples of Israel*: the few leaders. Israel assembled against Jesus in the person of their few leaders (see 2, 23 n).

4, 31: The verse is commonly entitled "little Pentecost" because the community is "confirmed" to speak boldly under threats as the apostles had requested (v. 29).

4, 32-35: One of the summaries as described in 2, 42-47 n.

4, 33: *Great power*: a probable reference to miracles. *Great grace*: this may refer to grace from God and favor from men.

4, 34-5, 11: The description of the common life (vv. 34f) is well exemplified by Barnabas (vv. 36f) and poorly by Ananias and Sapphira (5, 1-11).

35 would sell them and bring the price of what they sold | and lay it at the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made 36 to each, according as any one had need. Now Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is translated 37 Son of Consolation), a Levite and a native of Cyprus, | sold the field that he had, and brought the price and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

5

1 *Ananias and Sapphira* A man named Ananias, with 2 Sapphira his wife, sold a piece of land | and by fraud kept back part of the price of the land, with the connivance of his wife, and bringing a part only, laid it at the feet of 3 the apostles. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Spirit and by fraud keep back part of the price of the 4 land? While it yet remained, did it not remain thine; and after it was sold, was not the money at thy disposal? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not 5 lied to men, but to God." And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and expired. And great fear came upon 6 all who heard of it. And the young men got up and removed him and, carrying him out, buried him. 7 About three hours later his wife, not knowing what 8 had happened, came in. And Peter said to her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for so much?" And she said, "Yes, 9 for so much." And Peter said to her, "Why have you agreed

4, 36: *Barnabas*: the companion of Paul, mentioned in 9, 27 and 11, 22. *Son of Consolation*: a Semitic idiom for "one who consoled."

5, 1-11: The punishment was death, not eternal damnation. Nevertheless, the main difficulty is: why did the couple receive such a severe punishment, the most severe in the entire New Testament? The common opinion which explains that the crime of attempting to deceive Peter and the Holy Spirit merited this punishment seems inadequate. Also inadequate is another opinion which holds that because it was the first example of sin in the community it had to be punished severely. There is insufficient evidence for the following attractive conjecture: the couple died a natural death and this was interpreted as a punishment. Later the crime of having lied to the Holy Spirit was invented to justify the death penalty. Luke recorded this story because of its religious value, inasmuch as it asserted the respect due to the apostles and the Holy Spirit, and the importance of the common life.

5, 1: "Ananias" means "Yahweh is gracious." "Sapphira" means "beautiful." The inscription "Sapphira" is found on a burial urn in Jerusalem, but this does not prove that it refers to the Sapphira of this narrative.

to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they will
 10 carry thee out." And she fell down immediately at his feet and expired. And the young men, coming in, found her dead, and carrying her out they buried her beside her
 11 husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of this.

12 *Miracles* Now by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And with one
 13 accord they all would meet in Solomon's portico; | but of the rest, no one dared to associate with them, yet the
 14 people made much of them. And the multitude of men and
 15 women who believed in the Lord increased still more, so that they carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets that, when Peter passed, his shadow at least
 16 might fall on some of them. And there came also multitudes from the towns near Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those troubled with unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

17 *Arrest of the Apostles* But the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (that is the party of the
 18 Sadducees), and being filled with jealousy | seized the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night
 19 an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison and led them out, and said, | "Go, stand and speak in the
 20 temple to the people all the words of this life." And when
 21

5, 11: *Church*: the first use of *ekklesia* in Acts. Since its equivalent in Hebrew was the technical term for Chosen People, Luke may be insinuating that the Christian community has replaced the Chosen People of the Old Testament.

5, 12-16: The third of the "summaries" as described in 2, 42-47 n. Peter is recognized as head of the disciples by the people who bring the sick and possessed to him just as they brought them to Christ.

5, 13: One of several interpretations is the following: "But of the rest" (the non-Christians near Solomon's portico) "no one" (of these non-Christians) dared to associate with them (the Christians), yet the people (the same non-Christians) "made much of them" (the Christians).

5, 18: *The apostles*: some of the twelve or perhaps all of them.

5, 19: In Greek, the meaning is "messenger." Does Luke mean a spiritual being? Or does he mean "the angel of Yahweh" as in the Old Testament where it symbolized a personification of God's Providence? According to the latter sense, which many modern Catholic scholars endorse, the apostles escaped prison through a providential (natural or supernatural) act.

they heard this, they went into the temple about daybreak and began to teach.

But the chief priests and his party came and they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came and, opening the prison, did

23 not find them there, they returned and reported, | saying,

"The prison indeed we found securely locked, and the guards standing before the doors, but on opening it we

24 found no one inside." Now when the officer of the temple

and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them as to what might come of this.

25 But someone came and told them, "Behold, the men whom

you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching

26 the people." Then the captain went off with the officers

and brought them without violence, for they feared the people lest they should be stoned.

27 And having brought them, they set them before the

28 Sanhedrin. And the high priest questioned them, | saying,

"We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and want to bring this man's blood upon us."

29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We

30 must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers

raised Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging him on a

31 tree. Him God exalted with his right hand to be Prince

and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness

32 of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is

the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all who obey him."

5, 22-23: *The prison, did not find them there, they returned and reported, saying:* in Greek, "they did not find them in the prison and, returning, they reported, saying."

5, 26: *The captain:* the same Greek word (*strategos*) as "the officers of the temple" (see 4, 1 n).

5, 28: Since the apostles were unauthorized teachers they could be prosecuted only after they had disregarded the first warning (see 4, 18). *And want to bring this man's blood upon us:* the high priest accuses the apostles of inciting the people to take revenge on the Sanhedrin for executing Jesus, the Messiah (see Mt 27, 25 n).

5, 30: *Hanging him on a tree:* the reference to: "God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree" (Dt 21, 23) suggests the ignominy with which the Sanhedrin treated Jesus.

5, 31: *Him God exalted with (or at) his right hand:* an example of a theological ascension. See 1, 9-11 n for the explanation. *Prince:* in Greek, "author" of salvation.

5, 32: "The Holy Spirit" is a witness with or through the apostles as promised, according to Jn 15, 26-27.

- 33 But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart and wanted to slay them.
- 34 But there stood up one in the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law respected by all the people, and he ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do to these men. For some time ago there rose up Theodas, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was slain, and all his followers were dispersed and he was brought to nothing. After him rose up Judas the Galilean in the days of the census and drew some people after him; he too perished, and all his followers were scattered abroad. So now I say to you, Keep away from these men and let them alone. For if this plan or work is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow it. Else perhaps you may find yourselves fighting even against God."
- 40 And they agreed with him | and, calling in the apostles and having them scourged, they charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then let them go. So they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. And they did not for a single day cease teaching and preaching in the temple and from house to house the good news of Jesus as the Christ.

6

- ¹ *The Deacons* Now in those days, as the number of the disciples was increasing, there arose a murmuring among the Hellenists against the Hebrews that their widows were

5, 36: *Theodas*: otherwise unknown.

5, 37: *Judas the Galilean*: the Jewish historian Josephus mentions this Judas. From his followers came the Zealots who were so active in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. *Census*: on the sole authority of an obscure passage written by Josephus, many believe that this is the census of 6 A.D. (See the fourth objection in Lk 2, 1-3 n.)

5, 38f: Pharisees characteristically feared to make a wrong decision. See "Religious Background" in Introduction to the New Testament.

5, 42: *Preaching . . . the good news*: the first use in Acts of this technical expression for the preaching of the apostles.

6, 1: *Disciples*: this title for the faithful is peculiar to Acts. *Hellenists . . . Hebrews*: the Hebrews were Palestinian Jews who spoke Aramaic and read the Old Testament Bible in Hebrew; the Hellenists were Greek speaking Jews from abroad who read the Bible in Greek. The Hebrews regarded the Hellenists as contaminated with the spirit

² being neglected in the daily ministration. So the Twelve called together the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should forsake the word of ³ God and serve at tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, that we may put them in charge of this ⁴ work. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ⁵ ministry of the word." And the plan met the approval of the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicholas, a ⁶ proselyte from Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and after they had prayed they laid their hands upon them. ⁷ And the word of the Lord continued to spread, and the number of the disciples increased rapidly in Jerusalem; a large number also of the priests accepted the faith.

⁸ *Stephen's Arrest* Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was working great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ But there arose some from the synagogue which is called

of the pagan world; the broader-minded Hellenists saw in the Hebrews' pretended orthodoxy a semblance of fanaticism. Both groups retained their native nationalistic prejudices when they became Christians. The Hebrews who were in the majority, favored their own people in the distribution of food and alms.

6, 2: *The Twelve*: the dispute seems to be presented to the twelve apostles. *Forsake the word of God*: forgo preaching or "the ministry of the word" (v. 4).

6, 3: It is not known why seven men were chosen. The reason may have been that Jewish communities customarily chose seven members to conduct public affairs.

6, 5: All seven have Greek names. Stephen and Philip reappear in Acts, but nothing is known of the others. This verse coupled with 7, 59 form the offertory verse in the Mass of the feast of St. Stephen. *Nicholas, a proselyte*: see 2, 11 n.

6, 6: *They [the apostles most probably] laid their hands upon them*: this ceremony of conferring power is common in the Old Testament. (See Nm 8, 10 for the purification of Levites.) It is disputed whether these seven are "deacons" as are those in Phil 1, 1 and 1 Tm 3, 8ff. The seven are never called "deacons" and only Stephen (Acts 6, 8ff) and Philip (Acts 8, 5) are said to have preached. However, the office of preaching is ascribed to others (see Acts 8, 4; 11, 19). All seven have, at least, this in common: they perform material ministrations.

6, 7: *Priests*: not the high priests.

6, 9: Opinions on the number of synagogues referred to in this verse range from one to five. The synagogue in towns with a sizable Jewish population was used, among other things, for the discussion of the Mosaic Law (see "Religious Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament).

- that of the Freedmen, and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians and of those from Cilicia and the province of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit who spoke. Then they bribed men to say they had heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God.
- And they stirred up the people and the elders and the Scribes, and, running together, they seized him and brought him to the Sanhedrin. And they brought forward false witnesses to say, "This man never ceases speaking words against the Holy Place and the Law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the traditions which Moses handed down to us." Then all who sat in the Sanhedrin, gazing upon him, saw his face as though it were the face of an angel.

7

- Stephen's Discourse: the Patriarchs** And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" Then he said, "Brethren and fathers, hear. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, and said to him, 'Go forth from thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land that I will show thee.' Then he went forth from the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after the death of his father, God removed him into this land where you now dwell. And he gave him no property in it, not even a foot of land, but he promised 'to give it for a possession to him and to his offspring after him,' when as yet he had no son. And God said, 'His offspring shall sojourn in a strange

6, 13-14: The non-Christian Hellenists level against Stephen the charge that he makes Christ superior to the temple and to the Mosaic Law. Stephen's trial resembles that of Jesus who was falsely accused of intending to destroy the temple (Mt 26, 61).

6, 15: Stephen seems to be "transfigured" in consequence of his ecstatic vision (see 7, 56 n). With the end of ch. 6 the narrative seems to be interrupted and to be continued with 7, 55.

7, 2-53: Stephen does not answer his accusers directly but delivers a witness speech typical of a martyr. There are three opinions on the essential meaning of Stephen's speech on Israel's history from Abraham to Solomon. 1. Stephen attacked the temple and its cult. 2. Stephen saw the persecuted Christ prefigured in the Old Testament prophets who were persecuted. 3. This is the best opinion: Stephen preached a complete break with Judaism, and he meant perhaps that the Gentile converts should not be required to follow the Mosaic Law.

7, 6-7: See Gn 15, 3.

country, and they shall enslave and oppress them four hundred years. And the nation to which they have been in bondage, I will judge,' said God, 'and afterwards they shall go forth and shall worship me in this place.'

8 "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision, and so he begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.

9 *Joseph* "Out of jealousy the patriarchs sold Joseph into
10 Egypt, but God was with him | and rescued him from all his tribulations, and gave him favor and wisdom 'in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he made him governor over
11 Egypt and over all his household.' Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great tribulation, and our
12 fathers found no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there a first time,
13 | and on their second visit Joseph was recognized by his
14 brothers, and his family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent for his father Jacob and all his kindred, seventy-
15 five souls in all. And Jacob went down to Egypt, and he
16 and our fathers died | and were taken to Sichem and laid in the tomb which Abraham bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hemor, the son of Sichem.

17 *Moses* "Now when the time of the promise drew near that God had made to Abraham, the people increased and
18 multiplied in Egypt | till 'another king arose in Egypt who
19 knew nothing of Joseph.' He dealt craftily with our race and oppressed our fathers by forcing them to expose their
20 infants so that they might not live. At this time Moses was born, and he was acceptable to God; he was nourished three
21 months in his father's house, | and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her
22 own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and in his deeds.
23 And when he was forty years old, it occurred to him to visit
24 his brethren, the children of Israel. And when he had seen one of them being imposed upon, he defended him and, striking down the Egyptian, he avenged him who was being
25 ill-treated. Now, he thought that the brethren understood that by his hand God was giving them deliverance; but they did
26 not understand. The next day he came across them fighting

7, 16: On some minor points, Stephen does not follow the account in Genesis. He probably follows an unknown source.

- and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you
 27 are brethren; why do you injure each other?' But the man
 who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying.
 28 'Who has appointed thee ruler and judge over us? | Dost
 thou mean to kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?'
 29 At those words Moses fled, and lived for a time in the land
 of Madian, where he begot two sons.
 30 "When forty years had passed, there appeared to him in
 the desert of Mount Sinai an angel in a flame of fire in a
 31 bush. But when Moses saw it, he marvelled at the sight; but
 as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord,
 32 saying, | 'I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham,
 the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trem-
 33 bled and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him,
 'Remove the sandals from thy feet, for the place where thou
 34 art standing is holy ground. I have seen all the oppression
 of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning,
 and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I
 will send thee to Egypt.'
 35 "This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'Who has
 made thee ruler and judge?'—him God sent to be ruler
 and redeemer, with the help of the angel who appeared to
 36 him in the bush. This is he who led them out, working
 wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea
 37 and in the desert, forty years. This is the Moses who said to
 the children of Israel, 'God will raise up to you a prophet
 from among your brethren, as he raised up me; to him shall
 38 you hearken.' This is he who was in the assembly in the
 wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai,
 and with our fathers, and he received the words of life to
 39 give to us. But our fathers would not obey him, but thrust
 40 him aside and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, | saying
 to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us. As for this Moses
 who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know
 41 what has become of him. And they made a calf in those days
 and offered sacrifice to the idol and rejoiced in the works of
 42 their own hands. But God turned and gave them up to serve
 the host of heaven, even as it is written in the book of the
 Prophets:
 'Did you offer victims and sacrifices to me for forty
 43 years in the desert, O house of Israel? Why, you took up

7, 37: See 3, 22-23 n.

7, 38: Angel: See Gal 3, 19 n.

7, 42-43: See Am 5, 25.

with you the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Rempham, images that you made to worship. And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

44 *The Temple* "Our fathers had in the desert the tent of the testimony, as God arranged when he told Moses to make
45 it according to the model that he had seen. This tent also our fathers inherited, and they brought it here with them when under Josue they took possession of the territory of the Gentiles that God drove out before our fathers; and it remained
46 down to the time of David. He found favor before God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God
47.48 of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Yet not in houses made by hands does the Most High dwell, even as
49 the prophet says, 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth a footstool for my feet. What house will you build me,
50 says the Lord, or what shall be the place of my resting? Did not my hand make all this?'

51 *Conclusion* "Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ear, you always oppose the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did,
52 so you do also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now been the
53 betrayers and murderers, | you who received the Law as an ordinance of angels and did not keep it."

54 *Stephen's Martyrdom* Now as they heard these things, they were cut to the heart and gnashed their teeth at
55 him. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the
56 right hand of God; | and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of
57 God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped
58 their ears and rushed upon him all together. And they cast

7, 44: See Acts 15, 5 n.

7, 49-50: See Is 66, 1.

7, 54-60: See 6, 8-10 n.

7, 56: Stephen seems to experience an internal ecstatic vision since, as Jn 1, 18 says: "No one has at any time seen God." See 6, 15 n. V. 56 is used with the alleluia in the Mass of the feast of St. Stephen. The Sanhedrin understood Stephen's words as a claim that the risen Jesus was the Messiah and God (compare Mt 26, 64 n).

7, 58: Stephen's death resembles that of Jesus, for Stephen was also executed outside the city and, like Jesus, he also asks pardon for his executioners (see v. 60; 6, 13-14 n).

him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named
 59 Saul. And while they were stoning Stephen he prayed and
 60 said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Lord, do not lay this sin against them." And with these words he fell asleep. And Saul approved of his death.

8

1 **Persecution** Now there broke out on that day a great persecution against the Church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered abroad throughout the land of
 2 Judea and Samaria. And devout men took care of Stephen's
 3 burial and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was harassing the Church; entering house after house, and dragging out men and women, he committed them to prison.

II. THE CHURCH IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

4 **Samaria** Now those who were scattered abroad went
 5 about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city
 6 of Samaria and preached the Christ to them. And the crowds with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, listening to him and seeing the miracles that he worked.
 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, went out of

7, 59: Although the Sanhedrin could pass the death sentence, only the Romans could execute it (see Jn 18, 31 n). Since there is no mention of the Romans, some believe that the event happened in 36 A.D. after Pilate's deposition and before his successor was named. Others believe that, since Luke narrates only the highlights of the trial, he omits to mention the Romans; and it is also believed that the Sanhedrin may have obtained permission from the Romans, in which case the execution would have been legitimate (see 6, 5 n).

7, 60: The tradition, according to which the vicinity of the Damascus gate marks the site of St. Stephen's martyrdom and burial place goes back only to about 400 A.D.

8, 1: The "persecution" seems to have been launched by the non-converted Hellenists against the Christian Hellenists only, and not against the "Hebrews" (see 6, 1 n) because the apostles were not attacked.

8, 3: *Saul*: his story begins in 9, 1ff.

8, 4-40: The Acts of Philip the deacon (6, 5) give the first account of the spread of the Church outside of Jerusalem.

8, 5: *Went down*: Jerusalem is on a hill. *The city of Samaria*: it is unclear whether the capital city of the region Samaria or another city in Samaria is meant. (On the schismatic Samaritans see the end of "Religious Background" in the Introduction to the New Testament.)

- many possessed persons, and many paralytics and cripples
 8 were cured. So there was great joy in that city.
 9 Now a man named Simon had previously been practicing sorcery in that city and astounding the people of
 10 Samaria, claiming to be someone great; | and all from least to greatest listened to him, saying, "This man is the power
 11 of God, which is called great." And they gave heed to him because for a long time he had bewitched them with his
 12 sorceries. But when they believed Philip as he preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were
 13 baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed, and after his baptism attached himself to Philip; and at sight of the signs and exceedingly great miracles being wrought, he was amazed.
 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and
 15 John. On their arrival they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet he had not come
 16 upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on
 17 them and they received the Holy Spirit. But when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on
 18 of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, | saying, "Give me also this power, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
 20 But Peter said to him, | "Thy money go to destruction with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God
 21 could be purchased with money. Thou hast no part or lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God.

8, 10: "*This man is the power*": this man is that power.

8, 14: That Peter was sent is not an argument against his primacy, for he may have decided himself to go on this first mission.

8, 15-16: Since many New Testament passages teach that the Holy Spirit accompanied baptism, what is referred to here is the more visible manner in which the Holy Spirit made his presence felt at baptism (see 8, 18 n).

8, 17: The classical text for the Sacrament of Confirmation. *They laid their hands*: see 6, 6 n.

8, 18: When Simon realized that the presence of the Holy Spirit was manifested through the speaking in foreign tongues (as on Pentecost, 2, 4) or through speaking ecstatically (the gift of tongues, 10, 46), he committed the first New Testament example of simony, named after himself. Simon probably interpreted the imposition of hands as a more magically effective act than any of his own tricks.

8, 21: *Thy heart is not right before God*: Simon's intention is not pure.

- 22 Repent therefore of this wickedness of thine and pray to God, that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be for-
 23 given thee; for I see thou art in the gall of bitterness and
 24 in the bond of iniquity." But Simon answered, "Do you pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me."
 25 So they, after bearing witness and preaching the gospel of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many Samaritan villages.
- 26 *An Ethiopian* But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go south to the road that goes down
 27 from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This road is desert.) | And he arose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, who was in charge of all her treasures, had come to Jerusalem to worship
 28 | and was returning, sitting in his carriage and reading
 29 the prophet Isaia. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near
 30 and keep close to this carriage." And Philip, running up, heard him reading the prophet Isaia, and he said, "Dost
 31 thou then understand what thou art reading?" But he said, "Why, how can I, unless someone shows me?" And he asked Philip to get up and sit with him.
- 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

8, 22-23: *Perhaps*: the doubt refers not to God's willingness to pardon the sinner but to Simon's questionable disposition for repentance, for he is "in the gall of bitterness," i.e., "in the bond of iniquity."

8, 24: It is difficult to know whether Simon truly repents or pleads with one whom he regards as a better magician than himself. Nevertheless, it is from this passage that many apocryphal stories evolved which deal with the contests between Simon and Peter. The assertion that a statue of Simon was found on the Tiber island in Rome is incorrect. History has made him known to us as "Simon Magus" (see also Dante's *Inferno* 19. 1 and *Paradiso* 30. 147).

8, 25: See Mt 10, 5 n.

8, 26: *An angel of the Lord*: see 5, 19 n. *South*: others translate "at noon."

8, 27: *An Ethiopian*: not from Abyssinia but from modern Sudan. *A eunuch*: although Dt 23, 2 forbade eunuchs to become Jews, Is 56, 3 relaxed this law (see Is 56, 1-8 n). Though perhaps not a Jew, the eunuch was at least a "god-fearer" (see 2, 11 n). *Candace*: a dynastic name (like Caesar) of the queens of Meroe, capital of modern Sudan.

8, 29: "The Spirit" may be used interchangeably with the "angel" mentioned in v. 26.

8, 31: This verse is often quoted to prove the necessity of an authoritative interpretation of scripture.

8, 32-33: A quotation from Greek Is 53, 7-8.

- "He was led like a sheep to slaughter; and just as a lamb dumb before its shearer, so did he not open his mouth.
- 33 In humiliation his judgment was denied him; who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."
- 34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I pray thee, of whom is the prophet saying this? Of himself or of someone else?"
- 35 Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning from
- 36 this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. And as they went along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what is there to prevent my being
- 37 baptized?" [And Philip said, "If thou dost believe with all thy heart, thou mayest." And he answered, and said,
- 38 "I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God."] And he ordered the carriage to stop; and both Philip and the eunuch
- 39 went down into the water, and he baptized him. But when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but
- 40 he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found in Azotus, and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

9

- 1 *The Vision of Saul* But Saul, still breathing threats of slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the
- 2 high priest | and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, that if he found any men or women belonging to this Way, he might bring them in bonds to Jerusalem.

8, 37: This uninspired gloss seems to be based on a second-century baptismal formula.

8, 39: *The Spirit of the Lord took Philip away*: Luke may not necessarily refer to a miraculous physical transportation but to an action of God on Philip's will, which caused him to fall into ecstasy and, without resisting God's will, to betake himself to Azotus, about twenty miles away.

8, 40: *Was found*: or, "found himself."

9, 1: *Disciples*: the faithful. *The high priest*: he wielded authority in religious matters over Jews in any part of the Roman empire.

9, 2: Saul asked for letters that gave him the authority to demand from the officials of the synagogues to deliver to him those Jews who became Christians. In Saul's eyes they were rebellious Jews not a new sect. *This Way*: the Christians themselves called their new manner of life and their community by this title. See "the Way of the Lord" (18, 25).

3 And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus, when suddenly a light from heaven
 4 shone round about him; | and falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou
 5 persecute me?" | And he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom thou art persecuting. [It is
 6 hard for thee to kick against the goad." And he, trembling and amazed, said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"
 And the Lord said to him,] "Arise and go into the city,
 7 and it will be told thee what thou must do." Now the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing
 8 indeed the voice, but seeing no one. And Saul arose from

9, 3-9: A majority of experts sees in the inclusion of three accounts in Acts of the conversion of Paul the plain fact that Luke felt the need for such an account on three different occasions. The minority opinion claims that there was a different purpose for each account. Acts 9, 3-9, for instance, emphasize: Paul was a true apostle because he actually *saw* Christ. Acts 22, 3-21 emphasize: Paul was a *witness* like Stephen. Acts 26, 9-20 emphasize: Paul was a *prophet*, for the account alludes to the visions of Ezechiel and Jeremia.

All Catholics and many non-Catholics call Paul's instantaneous conversion a miracle. Furthermore, most believing scholars seem to agree that this was Paul's first great mystical experience. However, even though Paul claims to have seen the resurrected Christ just as the other apostles did (1 Cor 15, 8), it is disputed whether he saw Christ in reality or in an internal vision. Nevertheless, it is the common view that the "vision" of Christ and the revelation of the Gospel message together with the commission to preach, all took place simultaneously and not at different times in Paul's later life. This does not mean that Paul fully understood all the detailed truths of Christianity and all the details of his ministry from this one vision. Yet, every future decision was to be made in the light of his Damascus experience.

9, 3: *Damascus*: about 140 miles northeast of Jerusalem. This Greek city, mentioned seventeen times in the New Testament, was ruled by Aretas, an Arabian king. According to some historians, it is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. Damascus, a prosperous trade center, had a large Jewish colony. It is unknown how Christianity was introduced to this city.

Although three or four sites are pointed out to tourists, there is no real proof that any of them qualifies as the place of Paul's conversion.

9, 4-5: *Why dost thou persecute me?*: in Christ's members, the Christians. *I am Jesus, whom thou art persecuting*: in his members.

9, 5-6: The uninspired gloss comes from 22, 10 and 16, 14.

9, 5: *Who art thou, Lord?*: "Lord" is a common form of polite address. Paul had never met Jesus before this encounter.

9, 7: *The men . . . hearing indeed the voice, but seeing no one*: one of the parallel accounts (22, 9) reads: "my companions . . . did not hear the voice." Modern critics explain the discrepancies in the three accounts of Paul's conversion either as variations intended

the ground, but when his eyes were opened, he could see nothing. And leading him by the hand, they brought him
9 into Damascus. And for three days he could not see, and he neither ate nor drank.

- 10 **Saul's Baptism** Now there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision,
11 "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight and
12 ask at the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul. For behold, he is praying." (And he saw a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands upon him that he might
13 recover his sight.) But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has
14 done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here too he has authority from the high priests to arrest all who invoke
15 thy name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to me, to carry my name among nations and
16 kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."
17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and laying his hands upon him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me—Jesus who appeared to thee on thy journey—that thou mayest recover thy sight and be filled with
18 the Holy Spirit." And straightway there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he recovered his sight, and arose,

by Luke for stylistic reasons, or attribute them to his use of different literary sources. In the parallel account of 26, 9-20, for instance, Ananias is not even mentioned nor is Paul's blindness.

9, 10: *Ananias*: it is unknown when and how he became a Christian. *The Lord*: Jesus, not God, as v. 17 shows.

9, 11: The Arabic name of "Straight Street" still exists today. It is the main street running from east to west. *Judas*: otherwise unknown.

9, 12: This difficult verse is often explained as Luke's own dove-tailed insertion into the conversation between Jesus and Ananias. Luke says that Saul, while he prayed, saw in a vision Ananias who came to restore his sight before the disciple's actual arrival.

9, 13: *Saints*: the Christians.

9, 15-16: Christ reveals to Ananias the vocation of Paul, but in 22, 14-15 it is Ananias who reveals to Paul his vocation, and in 26, 16 Christ reveals it directly to Paul. See 9, 7 n on discrepancy.

9, 15: *A chosen vessel*: a Semitic expression for a chosen instrument.

9, 16: *For my name*: for Christ.

19 and was baptized. And after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul's Zeal Now for some days he joined the disciples
20 in Damascus,] and straightway in the synagogues he began
21 to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this he who used to make havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name, and who has come here for the purpose of taking them in bonds to the chief priests?"

22 But Saul grew all the stronger and confounded the Jews who were living in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23 But as time passed on the Jews made a plot to kill him.

24 | But their plot became known to Saul. They were even guarding the gates both day and night in order to kill him;

25 | but his disciples took him by night and let him down over the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 Now on his arrival at Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, not believing

27 that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and he told them how on his journey he had seen the Lord, that the Lord had spoken to him,

and how in Damascus he had acted boldly in the name of

28 Jesus. And he moved freely among them in Jerusalem, acting

29 boldly in the name of the Lord; he also spoke and disputed

30 with the Hellenists; but they sought to kill him. When the brethren got to know this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

9, 19-22: Immediately after his conversion in 39(?) A.D., Paul preaches in Damascus. According to Gal 1, 17 he then "retired into Arabia" to preach or meditate. "Arabia" probably signified the land east of Damascus ruled by the Nabateans who were Arabians. Afterward Paul "again returned to Damascus" (Gal 1, 17). Acts 9, 19-22 describes both of Paul's apostolates at Damascus, the first (v. 19) "for some days"; the second (v. 23) "as time passed on." Three years after his conversion he escapes from Damascus and goes to Jerusalem (Gal 1, 18; Acts 9, 23-26; 2 Cor 11, 32).

9, 20: *The Son of God*: this expression, used only here in Acts, signifies Jesus as the divine Messiah.

9, 25: It was not unusual that houses were built against the city wall.

9, 27: *Barnabas*: the same as in 4, 36.

9, 29: *Hellenists*: see 8, 1 n.

9, 30: Most likely the trip was made by sea from Caesarea to Tarsus.

- 31 *Peter Visits the Churches* Now throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria the Church was in peace and was being built up, walking in fear of the Lord, and it was
 32 filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit. And it came to pass that Peter, while visiting all the saints,
 33 came to those living at Lydda. And he found there a certain man named Aeneas who had kept his bed eight years, being
 34 a paralytic. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals thee; get up and make thy bed." And straightway
 35 he got up. | And all who lived at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.
 36 Now at Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which is translated Dorcas); this woman had
 37 devoted herself to good works and acts of charity. But it happened that at this time she fell ill and died; and
 38 they washed her, and laid her in an upper room. And as Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Come
 39 on to us without delay." And Peter arose and went with them, and on his arrival they took him to the upper room. And all the widows stood about him weeping and showing him the tunics and cloaks which Dorcas used to make
 40 for them. But Peter, putting them all out, knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise."
 41 And she opened her eyes and, seeing Peter, she sat up. | Then Peter gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and the widows, he gave her back to them alive.
 42 And it became known all over Joppa, and many believed
 43 in the Lord. And it came to pass that he stayed some time in Joppa at the house of one Simon, a tanner.

III. SPREAD OF THE CHURCH TO THE GENTILES

10

- 1 *Cornelius: the Visions* Now there was in Caesarea a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the cohort called Italian;

9, 31: *Galilee*: this is the first and only mention of the spreading of the Gospel in Galilee. *Built up*: spiritually.

9, 32: *Lydda*: about twenty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem.

9, 35: *Sharon*: the fertile plain around Lydda.

9, 38: *As Lydda was near Joppa*: about ten miles apart. *Dorcas*: means "gazelle."

9, 43: A small mosque is said to stand today on the site of the tanner's house.

10, 1: *Cornelius*: it is not necessary to believe that he descended from the illustrious Roman Cornelian family, but he may have de-

- 2 | he was devout and God-fearing, as was all his household, giving much alms to the people and praying to God
3 continually. About the ninth hour of the day he saw distinctly in a vision an angel of God come in to him and
4 say to him, "Cornelius." And he, gazing at him in terror, said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Thy prayers and thy alms have gone up and been remembered in the
5 sight of God. And now send men to Joppa and fetch one
6 Simon, surnamed Peter; | he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, 7 who has a house by the seaside." When the angel who was speaking to him had departed, he called two of his servants, and a God-fearing soldier from among his personal attend-
8 ants, | and after telling them the whole story sent them to Joppa.
9 Now the next day, while they were still on their journey and were just drawing near to the city, Peter went
10 up to the roof to pray, about the sixth hour; | but he got very hungry, and wanted something to eat. But while they
11 were getting it ready, he fell into an ecstasy, | and saw heaven standing open and a certain vessel coming down like a great sheet, let down by the four corners from
12 heaven to the earth; | and in it were all the four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth, and birds of the air.
13 And there came a voice to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and

scended from those who were freed by this family and who adopted its name. *A centurion of the cohort called Italian*: the rank of centurion was usually the highest attained by veterans who had no military schooling and no social standing. The cohort was probably made up of Italian volunteers, but Cornelius may have been on a special mission and separated from his cohort.

10, 2: *God-fearing*: see 2, 11 n. *His household*: family and servants.

10, 3: *Ninth hour*: 3:00 P.M. *Angel of God*: a synonym for angel of the Lord. The angel has probably a symbolic meaning (see 5, 19 n). Angel is used interchangeably for "a man . . . in shining garments" (v. 30). Scholars who think Luke did not mean a real angel do not thereby deny the supernatural source of the message and intervention.

10, 4: *Lord*: title of respect. *Been remembered*: literally, "for a memorial." The allusion is to the memorial or remembrance sacrifice in which part of the "cereal offering was burned as a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord" (Lv 2, 9).

10, 9: The two servants and the soldier probably left Caesarea about 3:00 P.M. (see 10, 3 n) and walked the twenty-seven miles to Joppa to arrive before noon ("the sixth hour") the next day.

10, 11: *A certain vessel*: a recipient.

10, 12: The Jews customarily divided all land animals into three categories (Gn 6, 20).

14 eat." But Peter said, "Far be it from me, Lord, for never
 15 did I eat anything common or unclean." And there came
 a voice a second time to him, "What God has cleansed,
 16 do not thou call common." Now this happened three times,
 and straightway the vessel was taken up into heaven.
 17 Now while Peter was still wondering as to what the
 vision he had had might mean, behold, the men sent by
 Cornelius stood at the door, inquiring for Simon's house;
 18 | and they called out to ask whether Simon, surnamed Peter,
 19 was staying there. But while Peter was pondering over the
 vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are
 20 looking for thee. Arise, therefore, go down and depart
 with them without any hesitation, for I have sent them."
 21 So Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am
 the man you are asking for; what is the reason for your
 22 coming?" And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a just
 and God-fearing man, to whom the whole nation of the
 Jews bear witness, has been directed by a holy angel to
 fetch thee to his house and to hear words from thee."
 23 So he invited them in and entertained them.

24 *Peter Meets Cornelius* And the next day he arose and
 started off with them, and certain of the brethren from
 Joppa accompanied him. The following day he reached
 Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, having
 25 invited in his relatives and his intimate friends. And as
 Peter entered, Cornelius met him and, falling at his feet,
 26 made obeisance to him. But Peter raised him up, saying,
 27 "Get up, I myself also am a man." And as he talked with
 28 him, he went in and found many assembled, | and he said to
 them, "You know it is not permissible for a Jew to associate
 with a foreigner or to visit him; but God has shown me that
 29 I should not call any man common or unclean; | therefore I
 came without hesitation when I was sent for. I ask, there-
 fore, why you have sent for me."

10, 14-16: This was the beginning of the new teaching that the Mosaic Law was no longer to be observed by Christians.

10, 19: *The Spirit*: his work is the same as that of "the angel of God" (see 10, 3 n).

10, 22: *A holy angel*: see 10, 3 n.

10, 26: The expression does not mean that Cornelius paid Peter divine honors.

10, 28: Jewish tradition, not the express Mosaic Law, forbade the Jews to associate with foreigners.

30 And Cornelius said, "Three days ago, at this very hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, and said, 31 'Cornelius, thy prayer has been heard and thy alms have 32 been remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon, surnamed Peter; he is lodging in 33 the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' Immediately therefore I sent to thee, and thou hast very kindly come. Now, therefore, we are all present in thy sight to hear whatever has been commanded thee by the Lord."

34 *Peter's Discourse* But Peter began, and said, "Now I really 35 understand that God is not a respecter of persons, | but in every nation he who fears him and does what is right is 36 acceptable to him. He sent his word to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (who is Lord of 37 all). You know what took place throughout Judea; for he 38 began in Galilee after the baptism preached by John: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and he went about doing good and healing all who were in the power of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all that he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; and yet they killed him, 40 hanging him on a tree. But God raised him on the third 41 day and caused him to be plainly seen, | not by all the people, but by witnesses designated beforehand by God, that is, by us, who ate and drank with him after he had risen 42 from the dead. And he charged us to preach to the people and to testify that he it is who has been appointed by 43 God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that through his name all who believe in him may receive forgiveness of sins."

44 *The Baptism* While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all who were listening to his 45 message. And the faithful of the circumcision, who had come with Peter, were amazed, because on the Gentiles also the 46 grace of the Holy Spirit had been poured forth; | for they

10, 30: See 10, 3 n. *Three days ago*: literally, "this is now the fourth day."

10, 33: *In thy sight*: in Greek, "in the sight of God."

10, 35: *He who fears him*: see 2, 11 n.

10, 37-43: A summary of the "good news" of the Gospel or the Church's *kerygma*. (See Introduction to the Gospels.)

- 47 heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone refuse the water to baptize these, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they besought him to stay on there a few days.

11

- 1 *Explanation at Jerusalem* Now the apostles and the brethren all over Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. But when Peter went up to Jerusalem, they of the circumcision found fault with him, 2 saying, "Why didst thou visit men uncircumcised and eat with them?" 3 Then Peter began to explain the matter to them in order, 4 saying, "I was praying in the city of Joppa and while in ecstasy I had a vision, a certain vessel coming down something like a great sheet, let down from heaven by its four 5 corners, and it came right down to me. And gazing upon it, I began to observe, and I saw the four-footed creatures of the earth, and the wild beasts and the creeping things, 6 and the birds of the air. And I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Arise, Peter, kill and eat.' And I said, 'By no means, 7 Lord, for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But the voice answered a second time. 'What God 8 has cleansed, do not thou call common.' This happened three times, and then it was all drawn up back into heaven. 9 And behold, immediately three men came to the house 10 where I was, having been sent from Caesarea to me; and the Spirit bade me not to hesitate to go with them. And these six brethren also went with me, and we entered the 11 man's house. And he told us how he had seen the angel in his house stand and say to him, 'Send to Joppa and fetch 12 Simon, surnamed Peter; he will speak to thee words by which thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy household.' But 13 when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as

10, 47: *Just as we did?*: a reference to Pentecost 2, 2ff.

10, 48: The direct intervention of God makes it clear that henceforth the Gentiles may become Christians through baptism and without circumcision.

11, 2: *They of the circumcision*: the party that considered circumcision as essential as baptism.

11, 3: See 10, 28 n.

11, 5-14: A repetition of 10, 9-32.

- 16 it did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
- 17 Therefore, if God gave to them the same grace as he gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I
- 18 that I should be able to interfere with God?" On hearing this they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, "Therefore to the Gentiles also God has given repentance unto life."
- 19 *The Converts at Antioch* Now those who had been dispersed by the persecution that had broken out over Stephen, went all the way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,
- 20 speaking the word to none except to Jews only. But some of them were Cyprians and Cyreneans, who on reaching Antioch began to speak to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord
- 21 Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them and a
- 22 great number believed and turned to the Lord. And news concerning them came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas as far as Antioch. Now when
- 23 he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and exhorted them all to continue in the Lord with steadfast heart;
- 24 | for he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great multitude was added to the Lord.

11, 16: A reference to Mt 3, 11.

11, 18: *They held their peace*: later disputes about the same issue show that some Christians considered Cornelius and his household as an exception, and that new converts still had to undergo circumcision.

11, 19: *Persecution . . . over Stephen*: a reference to 8, 1ff. *Phoenicia*: modern Lebanon. *Antioch*: the capital of Syria. Its population of 800,000 rated it third after Rome and Alexandria, Egypt. The Jews (mostly Syrians but also large segments of Greeks and Romans) lived on friendly terms. Antioch, though architecturally beautiful, was infamous for its superstitions and its cult of Daphne which, in its suburban garden, practiced all sorts of immorality that included ritual prostitution.

11, 20: Antioch was the first Gentile center that became Christian. Even if it could be proven that the conversion of the Gentiles ("Greeks") at Antioch preceded the conversion of Cornelius, it would remain true that in Luke's view it was Peter (who had repeatedly acted as the head of the first Christians) who decided on the principle of converting the Gentiles without obliging them to follow the Mosaic Law.

11, 21: *The hand of the Lord*: the power of God shown through miracles and cures. The expression is frequently used in the Old Testament (Is 41, 20).

11, 22: Notice how "the church in Jerusalem" acts as the mother church (8, 14).

- 25 And he went forth to Tarsus to look for Saul, and on find
 26 ing him he brought him to Antioch. And for a whole year
 they took part in the meetings of the church and taught :
 great multitude. And it was in Antioch that the disciples
 were first called "Christians."
 27 Now in those days some prophets from Jerusalem came
 28 down to Antioch, | and one of them named Agabus got
 up and revealed through the Spirit that there would be a
 great famine all over the world. The famine occurred in the
 29 reign of Claudius. So the disciples, each according to his
 means, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in
 30 Judea. And this they did, sending it to the presbyters by the
 hands of Barnabas and Saul.

CONCLUSION

PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY HEROD AGRIPPA

12

- 1 *Peter in Prison* Now at this time Herod the king set
 hands on certain members of the Church to persecute them.
 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword,
 3 and seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest

11, 25: According to 9, 30, Paul was last seen in Tarsus.

11, 26: *Christians*: in the New Testament the word is used only here and in 26, 28; 1 Pt 4, 16. Most probably the Greek speaking pagans, not Greek speaking Jews devised the name "Christians." The significance of Luke's incidental remark is that even to Gentiles the new sect was dissociated from any pagan and, especially, from any brand of Jewish schismatic sect.

11, 27: *Now in those days*: while Barnabas and Saul were evangelizing Antioch. *Prophets*: The charisma of prophecy comprised preaching and only incidentally predicting.

11, 28: *All over the world*: all over the Roman empire. The famine occurred in Palestine in 46(?) A.D. There were many famines in different parts of the Roman empire during the "reign of Claudius" (41-54 A.D.).

11, 29: *Disciples*: the faithful.

11, 30: *Presbyters*: literally, "elders."

12, 1: *Herod*: this refers to Herod Agrippa I who ruled Judea from 41-44 A.D. He was the grandson of Herod the Great, the ruler connected with the story of the Magi, and the nephew of Herod Antipas who ruled at the time of Christ's Passion.

12, 2-3: Herod Agrippa's persecution was probably motivated by his desire to win the support of the Pharisees. *James the brother of John*: not James, the relative of Jesus called "James the Less" (this

⁴ Peter also, during the days of the Unleavened Bread. After arresting him he cast him into prison, committing the custody of him to four guards of soldiers, four in each guard, intending to bring him forth to the people after the Passover.

⁵ So Peter was being kept in the prison; but prayer was being made to God for him by the Church without ceasing.

⁶ **His Deliverance** Now when Herod was about to bring him forth, that same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and outside the door sentries

⁷ guarded the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood beside him, and a light shone in the room; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly."

⁸ The chains dropped from his hands. And the angel said to him, "Gird thyself and put on thy sandals." And he did so; and he said to him, "Wrap thy cloak about thee and follow me."

⁹ And he followed him out, without knowing that what was being done by the angel was real, for he thought he was
¹⁰ having a vision. They passed through the first and second guard and came to the iron gate that leads into the city; and this opened to them of its own accord. And they went out, and passed on through one street, and straightway the
¹¹ angel left him. Then Peter came to himself, and he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the power of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

¹² When he realized his situation, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was surnamed Mark, where
¹³ many had gathered together and were praying. When he knocked at the outer door, a maid named Rhoda came to
¹⁴ answer it. And as soon as she recognized Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate, but ran in and an-
¹⁵ nounced that Peter was standing before the gate. But they said to her, "Thou art mad." But she insisted that it was so.
¹⁶ Then they said, "It is his angel." | But Peter continued

James is mentioned in v. 17), but James the Elder son of Zebedee. See 1, 26 n. *Days of the Unleavened Bread*: the seven days following the paschal supper.

12, 6-11: The "angel of the Lord" in v. 7 and "the Lord" in v. 17 are used interchangeably. See 5, 19 n. Some commentators believe that Luke refers to a fellow Christian who freed Peter.

12, 11: The verse is used in the Introit of the Mass on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

12, 13: *Rhoda*: means "Rose" in Greek.

12, 15: "*It is his angel*": this reflects the belief of the Jews in

knocking; and when they opened, they saw him and were
 17 amazed. But he motioned to them with his hand to be quiet,
 and related how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.
 And he said, "Tell this to James and to the brethren." And
 he departed, and went to another place.

18 **Herod Punished** Now when morning came, there was no
 little stir among the soldiers as to what had become of
 19 Peter. When Herod had searched for him and had not found
 him, he examined the guards and ordered them to be put to
 death; then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and
 stayed there.

20 Now he was very angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians;
 but they came to him in a body and, having won over
 Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, be-
 21 cause their country depended on him for its food supply. So
 a day was fixed and on it Herod, arrayed in kingly apparel,
 22 sat in the judgment-seat and began to address them. And
 the people shouted. "It is the voice of a god, and not of a
 23 man." But immediately an angel of the Lord struck him
 down, because he had not given the honor to God; and he
 was eaten by worms, and died.

24 But the word of the Lord continued to grow and spread.
 25 Now Barnabas and Saul, when they had fulfilled their mis-
 sion, returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, who
 was surnamed Mark.

guardian angels and the popular belief that the guardian angel could assume on occasion the appearance of his charge.

12, 17: *James*: see 12, 2-3 n. *He [Peter] departed and went to another place*: to a place outside of Herod's jurisdiction. It is only a conjecture to infer that Peter went to Rome.

12, 19: *Herod . . . ordered them to be put to death*: the usual Roman penalty for allowing prisoners to escape.

12, 20: Herod was probably angry because of commercial rivalry concerning the port of Caesarea and the ports of Tyre and Sidon. The parallel account of the historian Josephus is not illuminating on this point.

12, 21: According to Josephus, the "day" referred to the feasts that were held at Caesarea in honor of the emperor. Herod's silver-ornamented garment was dazzling in the bright light.

12, 23: Herod died in 44 A.D. from an intestinal malady ("eaten by worms"), attributed to God's action ("an angel of the Lord"). The death of another persecutor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, is similarly described in 2 Mc 9, 5-29.

12, 24: This is one of Luke's typical, precious summaries (see 19, 20).

12, 25: *Their mission*: a reference to 11, 29-30. *Mark*: the writer of the second Gospel.

II. THE CHURCH IN ASIA MINOR AND EUROPE — THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF ST. PAUL

I. FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

13

¹ *Antioch* Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, among whom were Barnabas and Simon, called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Saul and Barnabas unto the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them, they let them go.

⁴ *Cyprus* So they, sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went to Seleucia and from there sailed to Cyprus. On their arrival at Salamis they began to preach the word of God in the

13, 1—28, 31: The rest of Acts is often entitled "The Acts of Paul."

13, 1: *Prophets and teachers*: the more widely accepted opinion is that these were not members of the hierarchy but men who enjoyed the charisms of prophecy and teaching. *Simon . . . Lucius . . . Manahen*: otherwise unknown. *Herod the tetrarch*: Herod Antipas who mocked Jesus during the Passion (Lk 23, 11).

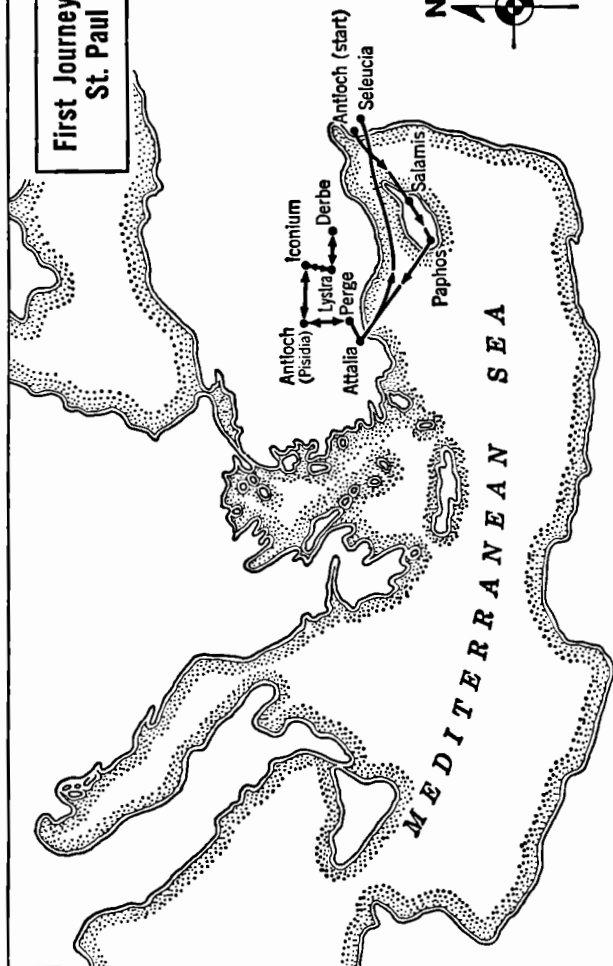
13, 2: *Ministering*: liturgical ministry. *Fasting*: in preparation for selecting missionaries. *The Holy Spirit said*: perhaps through one of the missionaries; endowed with the charism of prophecy, the Holy Spirit selected the two men to leave Antioch and go on a missionary journey. Compare the Holy Spirit prophesying through Agabus in 11, 28 and 21, 4.

13, 3: *Laid their hands upon them*: most probably a missionary farewell blessing from the community and not, as many Catholics interpret, a sacramental episcopal consecration. Among several objections to this interpretation is that Paul was directly called by Christ and did not need such a consecration.

13, 4: *Sent forth by the Holy Spirit*: see 13, 2 n. *Seleucia*: the seaport of Antioch, some sixteen miles west of the city. *Cyprus*: the homeland of Barnabas (4, 36) where the Gospel had already been introduced (11, 19). It was a strategic island for anchorage of ships from Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. The cult of Aphrodite was notorious there.

13, 5: *Salamis*: 130 miles from Seleucia. *Jews*: many Jews were there since the time when Herod the Great acquired a half share of the copper mines from Augustus. *John*: Mark the evangelist (see 12, 25 n).

First Journey of St. Paul



6 synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John as assistant. They went, passing through the whole island as far as Paphos, and there they came across a Jewish magician and false
7 prophet named Bar-Jesus, | who was attached to the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a man of discernment. He sent for Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God;
8 | but Elymas, the sorcerer (for so his name is translated), opposed them, trying to turn away the proconsul from the
9 faith. But Saul (also called Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit,
10 gazed at him | and said, "O full of all guile and of all deceit, son of the devil, enemy of all justice, wilt thou not
11 cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And instantly there fell upon him a mist of darkness, and he groped
12 about for someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, seeing what had happened, believed and was astonished at the Lord's teaching.

13 *Antioch in Pisidia* Putting to sea from Paphos, Paul and his companions came to Perge in Pamphylia; but John left
14 them and returned to Jerusalem. But they passed through Perge and reached the Pisidian Antioch; and entering the
15 synagogue on the Sabbath, they sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak."

16 *Paul's Discourse* Then Paul arose, and motioning with his hand for silence, said, "Israelites and you who fear God,

13, 6: *Paphos*: ninety miles from Salamis. *Magician*: see Mt 2, 1 n. *Bar-Jesus*: son of Jesus.

13, 8: *Elymas*: the same Bar-Jesus of v. 6.

13, 9: Henceforth Luke replaces the Jewish name Saul by the Roman or Gentile name Paul. It is not known when Paul received this new name.

13, 12: It seems implied that the proconsul was baptized.

13, 13: *Perge in Pamphylia*: Paul and his companions probably evangelized Perge only on their return trip (14, 24). *John*: we do not know the circumstances of the separation, but only know that it angered Paul (15, 38).

13, 14: *Pisidian Antioch*: there were several cities called Antioch. This particular city was 100 miles north of Perge.

13, 15: Visiting teachers were usually invited to speak.

13, 16: *You who fear God*: see 2, 11 n.

- 17 hearken. The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they were sojourners in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm led them forth out of
 18 it. And for a period of forty years he bore with their ways
 19 in the desert, | and after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land among them by lot |
 20 after about four hundred and fifty years. After that he gave
 21 them judges, until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then they demanded a king, and God gave them Saul, the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.
 22 And removing him, he raised up David to be their king, and to him he bore witness and said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all that I desire.'
- 23 "From his offspring, God according to promise brought to
 24 Israel a Savior, Jesus; | John having first preached before his coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of
 25 Israel. And when John was coming to the end of his career, he would say, 'I am not he whom you suppose me to be; but behold, there comes one after me, the sandals of whose
 26 feet I am not worthy to loose.' Brethren, children of the race of Abraham, and all among you who fear God, to
 27 you the word of this salvation has been sent. For the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its rulers, not knowing him and the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sab-
 28 bath, fulfilled them by sentencing him; | and though they found no ground for putting him to death, they asked of
 29 Pilate permission to kill him. And when they had carried out all that had been written concerning him, they took him
 30 down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead on the third day; and he was seen dur-
 31 ing many days by those | who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem; and they are now witnesses for him to the people.
- 32 "So we now bring you the good news that the promise

13, 17-41: Paul's first long discourse in Acts is an example of his way of preaching to the Jews.

13, 17-25: A summary of the history from the patriarchs to David and to John the Baptist.

13, 18: *Bore with their ways*: the Greek may also mean, "bore them like a nurse" or "fed them."

13, 26: *You who fear God*: see 2, 11 n.

13, 27-37: A summary of Christ's Passion.

13, 27: See 2, 23 n.

- 33 made to our fathers, God has fulfilled to our children, in raising up Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'
- 34 "And to show that he has raised him up from the dead, never again to return to decay, he has said thus, 'I will give you the holy and sure promises of David.' Because he says also in another Psalm, 'Thou wilt not let thy Holy One undergo decay.'
- 35 "For David, after he had in his own generation served God's purposes, fell asleep and was laid among his fathers and did undergo decay; | but he whom God raised to life did not undergo it. Be it known therefore to you, brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, | and in him everyone who believes is acquitted of all the things of which you could not be acquitted by the Law of Moses. Beware, therefore, that what is said in the Prophets may not prove true of you, 'Behold, you despisers, then wonder and perish, because I work a work in your days, a work which you will not believe, if anyone relates it to you.' "
- 42 Now as they were going out, the people asked to have all this said to them on the following Sabbath. And after the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and the worshipping converts went away with Paul and Barnabas, and they talked with them and urged them to hold fast to the grace of God. And the next Sabbath almost the whole

13, 33: Paul, equipped with the belief in the 'resurrected Christ as divine, and knowing that Ps 2, 7 originally was said of the Davidic kings (see Ps 2, 7 n), reinterprets the promise embodied in the psalm as fulfilled in Christ.

13, 34-37: Paul's scriptural argument (vv. 35-37), founded on Ps 15, 10 is basically the same as Peter's, which is explained in 2, 29-31 n and 2, 25-28 n. Paul's quotation (v. 34) from Is 55, 3 has no relevance to his argumentation. As an example of the strange manner of quoting in his day, Paul cites Isaia because the word "holy" is also used in Ps 15, 10 "Holy One." Due to different translators, Is 55, 3 in the CCD Old Testament translation does not correspond exactly with its quotation in v. 34.

13, 37: *But he*: Christ.

13, 38-41: An exhortation to accept justification through faith.

13, 39: Paul often repeats this truth, namely, that salvation comes from faith in Christ and not from the observance of the Mosaic Law.

13, 40-41: Those who do not take this opportunity of salvation may incur the punishment with which Habacuc (1, 5) threatened the people on the eve of the Babylonian invasion (see Hb 1, 5-11 n).

13, 43: *The grace of God*: the grace of belief in our Lord. *Worshipping converts*: probably means partial converts (see 2, 11 n).

45 city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But on seeing the crowds, the Jews were filled with jealousy and contradicted what was said by Paul, and blasphemed. Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out plainly: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we now turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles to be a means of salvation to the very ends of the earth.'" 48 On hearing this the Gentiles were delighted, and glorified the word of the Lord, and all who were destined for eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord spread throughout the whole country. But the Jews incited the worshipping women of rank and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them from their district. But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples continued to be filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

14

1 *Iconium* Now it came to pass at Iconium that they went in the same way into the synagogue of the Jews and so spoke 2 that a great multitude of Jews and of Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and poisoned the minds of 3 the Gentiles against the brethren. They stayed a long time,

13, 45: *Blasphemed*: Jesus, not God the Father. But instead of "blasphemed" it could also be translated, "abused him" (Paul).

13, 46: *Eternal life*: for Paul the Christian life was a life of grace which began on earth and anticipated the eternal life of glory in heaven.

13, 47: The original meaning of Is 49, 6, which is quoted here, is that the servant will be sent to save the Gentiles. (This mission was scripturally fulfilled in Christ, *the servant*.) Paul accommodates its text to justify his turning to the Gentiles since the Jews refused his message.

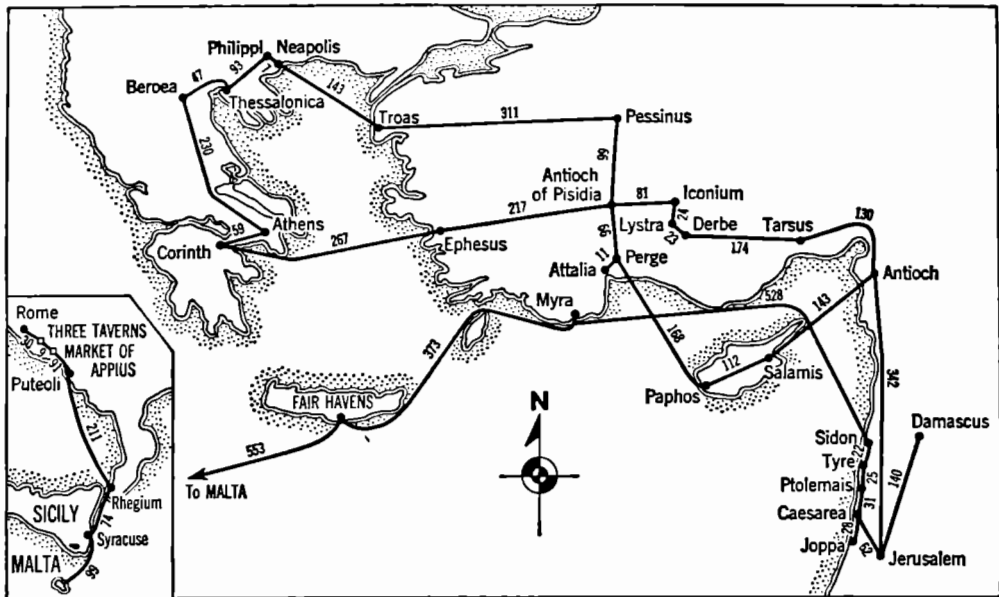
13, 48: See Rom 8, 28-30 n.

13, 50: *Thee worshipping women*: see 2, 11 n.

13, 51: This well-known Jewish gesture was a symbolic act of reproach meant to stimulate reflection and repentance. It was suggested by Jesus himself against stubborn people (Mt 10, 14). Here it signifies that Paul and Barnabas were no longer responsible for the Jews who rejected the Gospel (compare Acts 18, 6).

14, 1: *Iconium*: it took about four to five days to travel the eighty miles from Antioch (Pisidia) eastward to Iconium. *Greeks*: used synonymously with "Gentiles" in v. 2.

Pauline Cities: Map of distances in mileage



therefore, acting fearlessly in the Lord, who gave testimony to the word of his grace by permitting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the people of the city were divided, some siding with the Jews and some with the apostles. But when there was a movement on the part of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers to insult and stone them, | hearing of it, they escaped to the Lycaonian cities Lystra and Derbe and the whole country round about and there they went on preaching the gospel.

7 **Lystra** And in Lystra a certain man used to sit whose feet were crippled. He had been lame from his very birth, and 8 had never been able to walk. He listened to Paul as he spoke; when Paul, gazing at him and seeing that he had 9 faith to be cured, | said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." And he sprang up and began to walk. 10 Then the crowds, seeing what Paul had done, lifted up their voice saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods 11 have come down to us in the likeness of men." And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because he was 12 the chief speaker. And the priest of the Jupiter that stood at the entrance to the city brought oxen and garlands to the gateways, and with the people would have offered sacrifice. But on hearing of this, the apostles Barnabas and

14, 4: *Apostles*: notice the wider use of apostles to include Barnabas, who was not one of the twelve.

14, 6: *Lystra*: about twenty-five miles south of Iconium. *Derbe*: about thirty miles southeast of Lystra.

14, 7-9: Compare this miracle with that performed by Peter (3, 1-11).

14, 10: *Lycaonian language*: although Greek was the international language, the people naturally spoke their native language in times of great excitement. A few inscriptions of Lycaonian are extant. *The gods . . . in the likeness of men*: the people refer to the legend of Ovid which tells that Zeus and Hermes visited the aged peasant couple, Philemon and Baucis, in Phrygia, and granted them immortality. The people imagined that this legendary couple had in some way come to life in the two disciples.

14, 11: *Jupiter*: the Latin name for Zeus. *Mercury*: the Latin name for Hermes.

14, 12: *Of the Jupiter . . . entrance to the city*: the temple of Jupiter outside the city walls. *To the gateways*: of the temple or of the city.

14, 13: Since Paul and Barnabas did not understand the Lycaonian language, it took some time before they became aware that the people were about to offer sacrifice to them. *Apostles*: see 14, 4 n. *Tearing their clothes*: the dramatic Jewish gesture enacted at a catastrophe (see Mt 26, 65).

- 14 Paul rushed into the crowd, tearing their clothes, | and shouting, "Men, why are you doing this? We also are mortals, human beings like you, bringing to you the good news that you should turn from these vain things to the living God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all things
15 that are in them. In the generations that are past he let
16 all the nations follow their own ways; and yet he did not leave himself without testimony, bestowing blessings, giving rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts
17 with food and gladness." And even with these words they could hardly restrain the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.
- 18 But some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium; and after winning over the crowds, they stoned Paul and
19 dragged him outside the city, thinking that he was dead. But the disciples gathered round him and he got up and re-entered the city.
- 20 *Derbe; the Return* The next day he set out with Barnabas for Derbe. After preaching the gospel to that city and teaching many, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, |
21 reassuring the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and reminding them that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they
22 had appointed presbyters for them in each church, with prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord in
23 whom they had believed. Crossing Pisidia, they came to
24 Pamphylia, | and after speaking the word of the Lord in
25 Perge they went down to Attalia, | and from there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had first been entrusted to the grace of God for the work which they had now finished.
26 On their arrival they called the church together and reported all that God had done with them, and how he had opened
27 to the Gentiles a door of faith. And they stayed no little time with the disciples.

14, 14-17: This is Paul's first recorded speech to pagans. In it he naturally stressed monotheism.

14, 18-19: There must have been an interval of time between the event described in vv. 10-17 and this one. Vv. 18-19 telescope many events because Paul's rapid recovery was either a miracle or a marvelous physical feat, even if he may have set out for Derbe "the next day" (v. 20) on horseback.

14, 18: Paul recalls this stoning in 2 Cor 11, 24 "once I was stoned."

14, 22: "In whom" (Christ) "they had believed" (to be divine).

14, 24: *Perge*: see 13, 13 n.

15

1 Dissension at Antioch But some came down from Jude and began to teach the brethren, saying, "Unless you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved."
2 And when no little objection was made against them by Paul and Barnabas, they decided that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to the apostles and
3 presbyters at Jerusalem about this question. So they, sent on their way by the church, passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, relating the conversion of the Gentiles, and they
4 caused great rejoicing among all the brethren. On arriving at Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the presbyters, and they proclaimed all that God
5 had done with them. But some of the Pharisees' sect, who had accepted the faith, got up and said, "They must be circumcised and also told to observe the Law of Moses."

6 Peter's Decision So the apostles and the presbyters had a
7 meeting to look into this matter. And after a long debate, Peter got up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in early days God made choice among us, that through my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and
8 believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by
9 giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their
10 hearts by faith. Why then do you now try to test God by putting on the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither
11 our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they are."
12 Then the whole meeting quieted down and listened while Barnabas and Paul told of the great signs and wonders that God had done among the Gentiles through them.

15, 2: *They decided*: "in consequence of a revelation" (Gal 2, 2). *Certain others of them*: some of the companions of Paul and Barnabas, e.g., Titus (Gal 2, 4).

15, 5: These well-intentioned conservatives among the Pharisees had valid reasons for their stand because Christ himself never denounced circumcision nor the Mosaic Law, but only the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law. Besides, if the Church was the New Israel, it should carry on these two institutions as Israel had always done (see 11, 18 n).

15, 6-29: See Gal 2, 1-10 n.

15, 7-11: Peter alludes to the Cornelius episode (see 10, 1-48).

- 13 *Advice from James* After these had finished speaking,
 14 James made this answer, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. Si-
 mon has told how God first visited the Gentiles to take
 15 from among them a people to bear his name. And with this
 16 the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, 'After these
 things I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David
 which has fallen down, and the ruins thereof I will rebuild,
 17 and I will set it up; that the rest of mankind may seek after
 the Lord, and all the nations upon whom my name is in-
 voked, says the Lord, who does these things.'
 18 'To the Lord was his own work known from the begin-
 19 ning of the world.' Therefore my judgment is not to dis-
 quiet those who from among the Gentiles are turning to the
 20 Lord; but to send them written instructions to abstain from
 anything that has been contaminated by idols and from im-
 21 morality and from anything strangled and from blood. For

15, 13: *James*: this is James the leader of the Jerusalem Church, who is referred to in 12, 17.

15, 14: James refers to the Cornelius event (see 15, 7-11 n). *Simon*: 2 Pt 1, 1 is the only other New Testament instance where Peter's Hebrew name is given.

15, 15-18: James supports Peter's argument with quotations from Am 9, 11-12 and Is 45, 21.

15, 16-17: According to the Greek (Sep.) quoted here, the sense is that God will restore the defeated Davidic dynasty of kings, so that the Gentiles will be subject to them ('all the nations upon whom my name is invoked'). Though originally this text was most probably understood in a military and political sense, James explains it in a spiritual sense (v. 14). See Am 9, 11 n.

15, 18: The verse is perhaps a free translation of Is 45, 21. Regardless, it refers to the future conversion of the Gentiles. The interpretation of James here is that the moment known to God "from the beginning" arrived with the conversion of Cornelius.

15, 19-20: James compromises by offering four prohibitions so that, when taking meals together, the Christians converted from Judaism will not feel that the Christians converted from paganism are legally impure.

15, 20: *Contaminated by idols*: or "things sacrificed to idols" (v. 29). The reference is to that portion of the animal which was returned to the pagan offerer (after the priest took his portion) to eat or sell at the market. Converts from paganism rightly saw nothing wrong in buying such meat and eating it. Converts from Judaism sensitively considered it almost a partaking in a sacrilegious cult (see 1 Cor 8, 1-13 n). *From immorality*: on the dispute over the exact meaning of the Greek term *porneia* see Mt 19, 9 n. *From anything strangled*: animals not drained of their blood and, thus, considered foul or contaminated (see Gn 9, 4 n). *From blood*: this prohibition was based on the popular belief that, since blood symbolizes life, it belongs to God alone (Lv 17, 10-14).

15, 21: One of the many inadequate explanations of this obscure verse, in which James gives the reason for his instructions (vv. 19-20)

Moses for generations past has had his preachers in every city in the synagogues, where he is read aloud every Sabbath

22 *The Decision* Then the apostles and the presbyters with the whole church decided to select representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. These were Judas, surnamed Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. They were bearers of the following letter:

"The brethren who are apostles and presbyters send greeting to the brethren of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. As we have heard that some of our number have disturbed you with their teaching, unsettling your minds: persons to whom we had given no instruction, we have decided, being assembled together, to select representatives and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul: men who have pledged their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves also by word of mouth will give you the same message. For the Holy Spirit and we have decided to lay no further burden upon you but this indispensable one, that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from immorality; keep yourselves from these things, and you will get on well. Farewell."

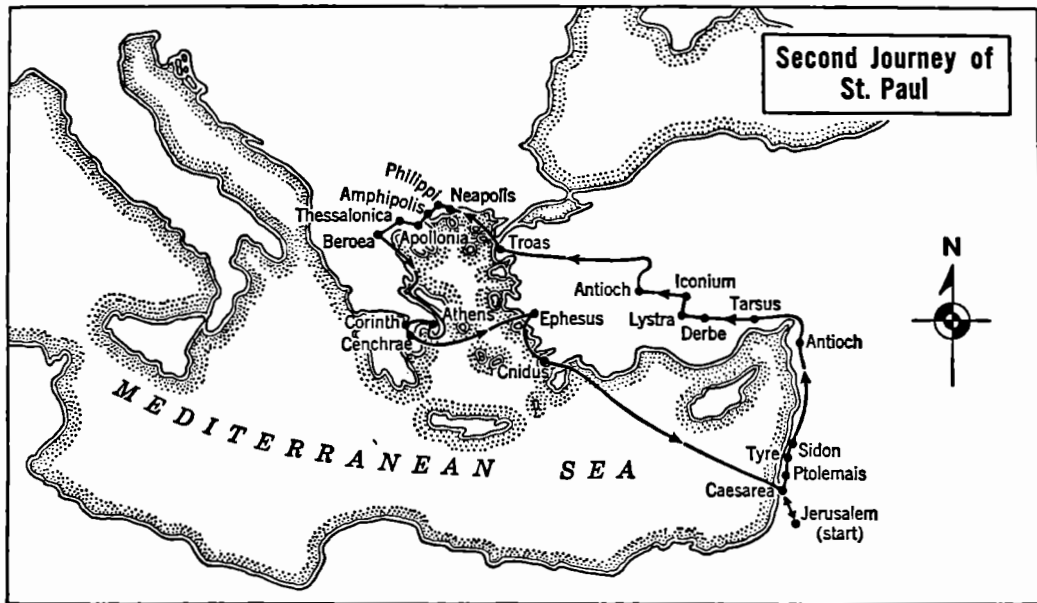
30 So the delegates went down to Antioch and, gathering the community together, they delivered the letter. And they, having read it, were delighted with the encouragement it gave them. As Judas and Silas were themselves prophets, they exhorted the brethren with many words and strengthened them. After spending some time there, they were let go by the brethren with a greeting to those who had sent them. [Silas however decided to stay there, and so Judas departed alone for Jerusalem.] But Paul and Barnabas stayed on in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others.

is: the Mosaic Law was so often repeated in the synagogues abroad that the converts from paganism ought to understand why these prohibitions are asked of them.

15, 22: *Judas*: though mentioned as a prophet (vv. 32-33), he is otherwise unknown. *Silas*: a prophet (v. 32) and companion of Paul (v. 40).

15, 26: *For the name*: for the person.

15, 28: An example of the awareness of the infant Church that she is acting under the influence and with the authority of the Holy Spirit.



II. SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

36 Paul and Barnabas Separate Now some time after Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in the cities where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." But Barnabas wanted to take with them John also, who was surnamed Mark. But Paul asked that he, inasmuch as he had deserted them in Pamphylia instead of going on with them to their work, should not again be taken along. And a sharp contention sprang up so that they separated from each other, and Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and set out, with brethren commending him to the grace of the Lord; and he travelled through Syria and Cilicia, and strengthened the churches [and commanded them to keep the precepts of the apostles and presbyters].

16

1 Timothy And he reached Derbe and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy, son of a believing Jewess, but of a Gentile father. And he was highly thought of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. This man Paul wished to go forth with him, and he took and circumcised him on account of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Gentile. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered to the brethren for their observance the decisions arrived at by the apostles and presbyters in Jerusalem. So the churches grew stronger and stronger in the faith and increased in number daily.

15, 36: A reference to the cities of the first missionary journey in 13, 1—14, 27.

15, 38: A reference to 13, 13 n.

15, 39: Barnabas and Mark vanish from Luke's account. The apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas, written about 125 A.D. in Alexandria was not composed by Barnabas.

16, 1: *Timothy*: to whom Paul (?) would later write: "To Timothy, his beloved son in the faith" (1 Tm 1, 2).

16, 3: Although Paul was convinced that converts from paganism should not be compelled to be circumcised, he did circumcise Timothy since his Jewish adversaries might have objected to Timothy as an uncircumcised missionary! In Jewish eyes, anyone born of a Jewish mother, even if the father was a Gentile (v. 1) remained an apostate as long as he was not circumcised.

6 Departure for Macedonia Passing through Phrygia and the Galatian country, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in the province of Asia. And when they came to Mysia, they tried to get into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; | so passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And Paul had a vision one night; a Macedonian was standing, appealing to him and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." | As soon as he had the vision, straightway we made efforts to set out for Macedonia, being sure that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 Preaching at Philippi So sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis, | and thence to Philippi, the principal city of a part of Macedonia, a Roman colony. We stayed some days in this city; | and on the Sabbath we went outside the gate to the bank of the river, where there seemed to be a place of prayer. And we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, was listening; and the Lord touched her heart to give heed to what was being said by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she appealed to us and said,

16, 6: The Greek reads: "they passed through Phrygia and the Galatian country, after having been forbidden." *The province of Asia*: the Aegean coastal area around Ephesus (capital) and Smyrna.

16, 7: *But the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them*: Luke does not say how the Spirit forbade them. Through a warning from a prophet? Through a natural event which they interpreted as providential? Through Paul's illness? The expression "Spirit of Jesus" occurs only once more in the New Testament (Phil 1, 19). It is synonymous with the Holy Spirit mentioned in v. 6.

16, 8: *Troas*: a city near ancient Troy, founded by the successors of Alexander the Great. It was a Roman colony.

16, 9: The Macedonian was recognized by his long cloak and broad brimmed hat.

16, 10-17: A "we" passage (see Introduction to Acts).

16, 11: *We ran*: the first of the "we" passages indicates Luke's presence (see Introduction to Acts). The sea route from Troas in Asia Minor to Neapolis in Macedonia—with the island of Samothrace as mid point—is 175 miles.

16, 12: *Philippi*: (see Introduction to Epistle to the Philippians.) The city was ten miles north of Neapolis. In the Roman colony of Philippi the Christians encountered Latin culture for the first time.

16, 13: Apparently there were too few Jews to have a synagogue.

16, 14: *Thyatira*: see Ap 2, 16 n. *Who worshipped God*: a proselyte, not a born Jewess (see 2, 11 n).

"If you have judged me to be a believer in the Lord, come into my house and stay there." And she insisted upon our coming.

- 16 ***A Possessed Girl*** Now it came to pass as we were going to the place of prayer that a girl met us who possessed divining spirit and brought her masters much profit
- 17 soothsaying. She followed Paul and ourselves and kept crying out, saying, "These men are servants of the most high
- 18 God and they proclaim to you a way of salvation." This she did for many days; until Paul, being very much grieved, turned and said to the spirit, "I order thee in the name of Jesus Christ to go out of her." And it went out at that very moment.
- 19 ***Arrest of Paul and Silas*** But on seeing that their hope of profit was gone, her masters seized Paul and Silas and
- 20 dragged them into the market place to the rulers; | and bringing them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are making a great disturbance in our city; they are Jews
- 21 | and are advocating practices which it is against the law for us to adopt or observe, since we are Romans.
- 22 And the people joined in the attack against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and ordered them
- 23 to be beaten with rods; | and after inflicting many lashes upon them they cast them into prison, charging the jailer
- 24 to keep them safely. On receiving such orders, he cast them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.
- 25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying, singing the praises of God, and the prisoners were listening to
- 26 them; | and suddenly there was such a great earthquake that

16, 16: *A divining spirit*: literally "a python spirit." Python echoes Ovid's mythological story of the serpent (python) who pronounced oracles at Delphi and was slain by Apollo who then prophesied in place of the python. The priestess who succeeded Apollo was known as Pythia. She sat on a three-legged stool draped with the skin of the serpent.

16, 18: Although her words were true, Paul did not care for them because the girl was possessed.

16, 19: *The market place*: excavations show the court and prison in the forum.

16, 20-21: The accusation of the "masters" (v. 19) is that Paul and Silas are Jews who make converts among the Romans, which is against the law.

16, 20: *Magistrates*: praetors.

16, 24: *The inner prison*: probably a dungeon.

16, 26: *Earthquake*: it was not necessarily a miraculous earthquake.

the foundations of the prison were shaken. And at once all the doors flew open, and everyone's chains were unfastened. And the jailer, roused out of sleep and seeing that the doors of the prison were open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying. "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." Then calling for a light, he ran in and trembling for fear fell down before Paul and Silas; and bringing them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his household. And he took them at that very hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he and all his family were baptized immediately. And taking them into his house, he set food before them, and rejoiced with all his household over his faith in God.

Freedom But when day came, the magistrates sent the lictors with the instructions, "Let these men go." And the jailer reported these words to Paul: "The magistrates have sent word that you are to be released; now therefore come forth and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly and without trial, although we are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now are they going to put us out secretly? By no means, but let them come themselves and take us out." The lictors reported these words to the magistrates, and on hearing that they were Romans they were alarmed and came and appealed to them; and taking them out, besought them to leave the city. And leaving the prison they went to Lydia's house, and after seeing the brethren and encouraging them, they departed.

17

¹ Thessalonica Now after passing through Amphipolis and

but Luke might here be interpreting a natural earthquake as a divine intervention. The earthquake could have damaged the walls so that "the doors flew open" and everyone's "chains were unfastened" from the reverberating wall.

16, 35-36: No reason is given for the magistrates' change of mind. Perhaps they deemed a night's imprisonment sufficient punishment.

16, 37: It is not known why Paul did not make this protest sooner.

16, 39: *Leave the city*: they probably feared another riot.

17, 1: The journey was along the famous Via Egnatia. *Amphipolis*: thirty-three miles from Philippi. *Apollonia*: thirty miles from Amphi-

Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a
 2 synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as was his custom, went in
 to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the
 3 Scriptures; | explaining and showing that the Christ had to
 suffer and rise from the dead, and that this is the Christ, even
 4 Jesus, whom I preach to you. And some of them believed
 and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of
 the worshipping Greeks and of the Gentiles, and not a
 5 few women of rank. But the Jews, moved with jealousy,
 took certain base loafers, and forming a mob, set the city
 in an uproar. They attacked Jason's house and sought to
 6 bring them out to the people; | but not finding them, they
 dragged Jason and certain brethren before the magistrates of
 the city, shouting. "These men who are setting the world
 7 in an uproar have come here too, | and Jason has taken
 them in; and they are all acting contrary to the decrees of
 8 Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And they
 stirred up the people and the magistrates of the city who
 9 heard this; | and they accepted bail from Jason and the rest
 and then let them go.

10 **Beroea** But the brethren straightway sent Paul and Silas
 away by night to Beroea, and on their arrival there they
 11 went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were of a
 nobler character than those of Thessalonica and they received
 the word with great eagerness, studying the Scriptures every
 12 day to see whether these things were so. Many of them
 became believers, and so did no small number of prominent
 13 Gentiles, women and men. But when the Jews of Thessa-
 lonica found out that in Beroea too the word of God had
 been preached by Paul, they came there also to stir up and
 14 excite the multitude. Then straightway the brethren sent
 forth Paul to go as far as the sea, while Silas and Timothy
 15 remained there. But those who escorted Paul took him as

polis. *Thessalonica*: thirty-seven miles from Apollonia. (See Introduction to 1 Thes on the history of Thessalonica.)

17, 4: *Worshipping Greeks and of the Gentiles*: see 2, 11 n.

17, 6: *Jason*: a Hellenistic form for the Jewish name Josue or Jesus. Perhaps Jason's house was used for meetings by the Christians. *Magistrates of the city*: the Greek "politarchs." Inscriptions show how accurate Luke was here, for this is a title peculiar almost exclusively to Macedonia.

17, 10: *Beroea*: modern Verria where there is still a Jewish community. It is about fifty miles from Thessalonica.

17, 12: The only known Christian from Beroea is Sopater (20, 4).

far as Athens, and receiving instructions from him to Silas and Timothy to rejoin him as soon as possible, they set out.

- 16 *Athens* Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, he was exasperated to see how the city was wholly given to
 17 idolatry. He had discussions therefore in the synagogue with the Jews and those who worshipped God, and in the market
 18 place every day with those who were there. And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him; and some said, "What is this babbler trying to say?" But others, "He seems to be a herald of strange gods," because he proclaimed
 19 to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know just
 20 what is this new doctrine which thou teachest? For thou bringest some strange things to our ears; we wish therefore to
 21 know what these things mean." (Now all the Athenians and the visitors there from abroad used to spend all their leisure telling or listening to something new.)

17, 16: *Athens*: in Paul's time, Athens was inferior to Corinth both politically and commercially. Yet it still glowed as the university city of classical antiquity since it was the center of philosophy, culture, and even religion in the pagan sense. No city could rival Athens for its rich temples, altars, statues, and images.

17, 17: *Those who worshipped God*: God-fearers (see 2, 11 n).

17, 18: *The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers*: we can sympathize with Paul's difficult audience because the Epicureans taught that the atoms of which gods were made were finer than those of men; the Stoics taught a pantheistic god. Other less influential philosophers of the day not mentioned by Luke were the Peripatetics of Aristotle and the Academicians of Plato. *Strange gods*: they thought that Paul proclaimed two deities, namely: "Jesus, and the resurrection." Owing to the Greek word for resurrection, *Anastasis*, they probably considered it a goddess or an abstraction, for the Athenians were familiar with shrines dedicated to abstract ideas.

17, 19: Before the time of Paul the term Areopagus meant the hill west of the Athenian Acropolis, where the Areopagites, the council of judges, held court. At the time of Paul the Areopagus referred to the *hill* or to the *council* of judges, even though they probably met not on the hill, but in the courthouse located in the market place (*Agora*). It is disputed whether Paul spoke on the *hill* because it was a quieter place than the noisy "market place" (v. 17) and informally to an interested group, or whether he spoke formally on trial before the *council* in the market place since the council had control perhaps over religion, education, and public instruction.

17, 21: *The visitors there from abroad*: especially foreign students. *Something new*: not gossip nor news but novel intellectual opinions.

22 Paul's Discourse Then Paul stood up in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, "Men of Athens, I see that in every
 23 respect you are extremely religious. For as I was going about and observing objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the Unknown God.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, that I proclaim to
 24 you, God, who made the world and all that is in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples
 25 built by hands; | neither is he served by human hands as though he were in need of anything, since it is he who
 26 gives to all men life and breath and all things. And from one man he has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth, determining their
 27 appointed times and the boundaries of their lands; | that they should seek God, and perhaps grope after him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

17, 22-31: It is difficult to say to what degree Luke entered into the composition of this discourse, even though the ideas are Pauline (Rom 1, 19ff; 1 Cor 15, 14-15; 8, 4-6). Nevertheless, Paul's most famous speech in Acts is valuable as a model of the way he preached to cultured Greek non-believers.

17, 22-23: Paul remarks that the Athenians are so extremely "religious" as to worship many gods and, lest any be forgotten, to even have built (v. 23) an altar "to the Unknown God" (as moderns would build a tomb to the Unknown Soldier for the same reason). Vv. 22-23 recall a famous adage from the Roman satirist Petronius: "Our country is so full of divinities that in it you may more easily find a god than a man."

17, 23: *To the Unknown God*: even though no inscription has ever been found of an altar to an unknown god, evidence of ancient writers, e.g., Pausanias, prove that there were many altars erected in Athens to *unknown gods*. Even if the altar which Paul saw carried the inscription "To the Unknown Gods," Paul spoke of and reasoned from it in the singular to teach monotheism.

17, 24: *Does not dwell*: is not confined to.

17, 25: *As though he were in need of anything*: classical writers expressed the same idea. Compare, e.g., Euripides: "God has no need, if he is really God, of anything."

17, 26: *Determining their . . . boundaries of their lands*: it is unclear whether Paul refers to God setting the limits of the waters from the earth as in Gn 1, 9-10 or determining the boundaries of peoples' lands as in Gn 10. Regardless, Paul's main idea is that the order in the world leads to a knowledge of the true God. It is this passage in the New Testament that racial segregationists most frequently quote. To read a modern problem into a text, which does not consider modern times and modern problems, is anachronistic and unscholarly.

17, 27: *He is not far*: this idea is paralleled in the Old Testament (Jer 23, 23f), and in Stoic works, e.g., "God is near you, with you and in you," Seneca.

- 28 For in him we live and move and have our being, as indeed some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.'
- 29 "If therefore we are the offspring of God, we ought not to imagine that the Divinity is like to gold or silver or stone, to an image graven by human art and thought. The times of this ignorance God has, it is true, overlooked, but now he calls upon all men everywhere to repent; | inasmuch as he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world with justice by a Man whom he has appointed, and whom he has guaranteed to all by raising him from the dead."
- 32 Now when they heard of a resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We will hear thee again on this matter." So Paul went forth from among them.
- 34 Certain persons however joined him and became believers; among them were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

18

- 1 *Corinth* After this he departed from Athens and came to Corinth. And there he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul visited them | and, as he was of

17, 28: *For in him we live and move and have our being*: a quotation from the poem on Minosses written by the sixth century Cretan poet, Epimenides. *Some of your own poets have said*: 'For we are also his offspring': "some" means that this verse is found in the third century poem *Phenomena* by Aratus of Soli in Cilicia, and in *Hymn to Jupiter* by Cleanthes of Assos in Troas.

17, 31: *A Man*: Jesus.

17, 32: *Sneer*: see 1 Cor 15, 12 n.

17, 34: *Dionysius the Areopagite*: it cannot be historically proven from the writings of Eusebius that Dionysius was the first bishop of Athens. Many legends were spun concerning him. *Damaris*: otherwise unknown. It cannot be proven from St. John Chrysostom that Damaris was the wife of Dionysius. *And others with them*: Paul failed as a preacher in Athens.

18, 1: *Corinth*: see Introduction to 1 Corinthians.

18, 2: *Aquila* . . . *Priscilla*: they are mentioned six times in the New Testament. It cannot be proven that they were the persons whose names have been inscribed in the Roman catacombs of Priscilla. *Pontus*: in Asia Minor (Turkey), southeast of the Black Sea. *Claudius*: the Roman emperor who expelled the Jews about 49 A.D. According to the historian, Gaius Suetonius, the reason was the Jewish attempt to prevent the spreading of the religion of "Chrestus," generally interpreted as an error for Christus, Christ.

the same trade, he stayed with them and he set to work; for
 4 they were tent-makers by trade. And he would preach in
 the synagogue every Sabbath, [bringing in the name of
 the Lord Jesus] and try to convince Jews and Greeks.
 5 But when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul
 was wholly occupied with the word, emphatically assuring
 6 the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. But as they contradicted
 him and blasphemed, he shook his garments in protest and
 said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am in-
 7 nocent of it. Henceforth I will go to the Gentiles." And he
 departed from there, and went into the house of a man named
 Titus Justus, a worshipper of God; his house adjoined the
 8 synagogue. But Crispus, the president of the synagogue,
 believed in the Lord and so did all his household, and
 many of the Corinthians heard Paul, and believed, and were
 9 baptized. And one night the Lord said to Paul in a vision,
 10 "Do not fear, but speak and do not keep silence; | because
 I am with thee, and no one shall attack thee or injure thee,
 11 for I have many people in this city." So he settled there a year
 and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 *Gallio* But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the
 Jews made a concerted attack upon Paul and took him
 13 before the tribunal, | saying, "This fellow is persuading men
 14 to worship God contrary to the Law." But as Paul was about
 to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If there were
 some question of misdemeanor or serious crime, O Jews, I
 15 should with reason bear with you. But if these are questions
 of doctrine and of titles and of your Law, look to it your-
 16 selves; I have no wish to decide such matters." And he drove

18, 5: *Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia*: see 17, 14-15.

18, 6: *He shook his garments*: see 13, 51 n.

18, 7: *A worshipper of God*: see 2, 11 n.

18, 8: *Crispus*: in 1 Cor 1, 14 Paul says he baptized Crispus.
The President: his duty was to invite qualified speakers to the
 synagogue (see "Religious Background" in Introduction to the New
 Testament).

18, 12: *Gallio*: Lucius Junius Gallio, the brother of Seneca the
 philosopher, was a native of Cordova, Spain. According to an inscrip-
 tion at Delphi, the incident narrated in v. 12 is dated 52 A.D.

18, 13-16: The difficulty here is: which Law is meant in v. 13,
 Jewish or Roman? The Jewish religion (the Mosaic Law) was
 protected by Roman law as a licensed religion. One opinion is that
 the Jews could denounce to the Roman authorities one of their own
 Jewish brethren (as, for instance, Paul) who was unfaithful to the
 Jewish religion. In this manner of denunciation the Jews could safe-
 guard their privilege and not run the risk of losing it, for no one

17 them from the tribunal. Then they all seized Sosthenes, the president of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal; but Gallio paid no attention to it.

18 *Return to Antioch* But Paul, after staying there some time longer, took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila; at Cenchrae he had his head shaved, 19 because of a vow he had made. He arrived at Ephesus and there he left them; but he himself entered the synagogue 20 and had a discussion with the Jews. But when they besought 21 him to stay some time longer, he did not consent, | but bade them farewell, saying, "I will come back to you, God 22 willing." He put to sea from Ephesus, | and landing at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem to pay his respects to the church and then went down to Antioch.

would accuse the denouncers to be advocates of a new religion. Another opinion, less favored, is that the Jews denounced Paul outright to Gallio for introducing a religion not allowed by *Roman law*.

Irrespective of the intention that the Jews had in mind, Gallio cleverly interprets their complaint as a violation of the purely religious "doctrine" (v. 15) of their religion and dismisses the charge. The importance of Gallio's decision was this: if he had decided against Paul, the Jews would have cited the decision in their subsequent court trials against Paul at Caesarea and Rome.

18, 17: *They all seized Sosthenes*: see 1 Cor 1, 1. Who seized Sosthenes? "They all" may refer to the Jews who beat Sosthenes, probably because he sided with Paul. "Gallio paid no attention" to this disorder which was in protest of his rebuff.

If another reading of the text is correct, namely, "all the Greeks," then the meaning is that the Greeks, encouraged by Gallio's rebuff of the Jews, took advantage of the occasion to vent their hatred of the Jews by beating up Sosthenes. In either instance, "Gallio paid no attention to it."

18, 18: *Sailed for Syria*: the final goal was Antioch in Syria (v. 22). *Cenchrae*: Corinth's eastern port on the Aegean sea (Rom 16, 1). *He had his head shaved*: who? Most probably Paul, not Aquila. *A vow*: a Nazirite vow included not cutting one's hair for about a month. See Nm 6, 1-21 n. Two theories of this obscure verse are: 1. At Cenchrae, Paul shaved his head at the completion of the vow taken previously. 2. Paul took his vow at Cenchrae and completed it at Jerusalem (21, 23-36).

18, 19: *Ephesus*: the city, situated on the present-day southwestern Aegean coast of Turkey, was founded before 1100 B.C. It became part of the Roman empire in 133 B.C. This wealthy seaport became the capital of the Roman province of Asia. The city was notorious for its magical arts (see Acts 19, 19 n). In New Testament times its population reached 250,000. During his second and third missionary journeys Paul lived at Ephesus for about three years. (See Acts 19, 27 n on the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

III. THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- 23** *Return to Ephesus* After spending some time there he departed, and travelled through the Galatian country and Phrygia in turn, strengthening all the disciples.
- 24** Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, and
- 25** mighty in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, used to speak and teach carefully whatever had to do with Jesus, though
- 26** he knew of John's baptism only. This man therefore began to speak confidently in the synagogue, and on hearing him Priscilla and Aquila took him home and expounded the
- 27** Way of God to him more precisely. And as he wanted to go to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival there he
- 28** was of great service to those who had believed, | for he vigorously refuted the Jews in public and showed from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

19

- 1** Now it was while Apollos was in Corinth that Paul, after passing through the upper districts, came to Ephesus

18, 24: *Apollos*: he is mentioned in four other passages. *Alexandria*: Jerusalem was the center for the Mosaic Law and the temple liturgy; Antioch was the center of Judaism influencing the Hellenists; Alexandria was the center of Hellenism influencing the Jews. *Eloquent man*: closer to the Greek is: "an eloquent man of culture." *Mighty in the Scriptures*: the Old Testament.

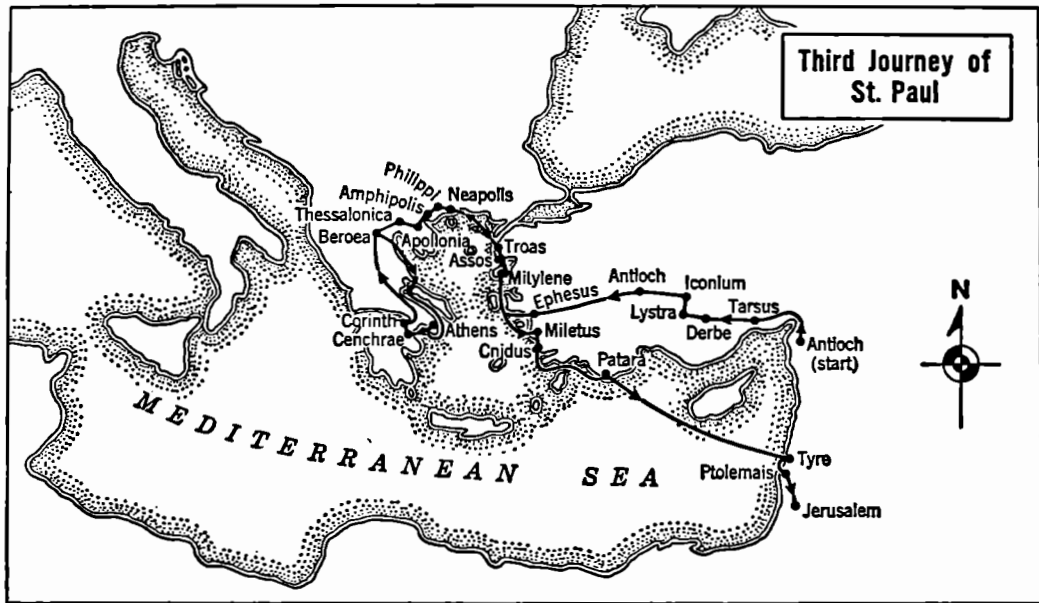
18, 25: *The Way of the Lord*: or "way of God" (v. 26). Even though these two expressions are mentioned in connection with "John's baptism" (v. 25), it remains only an educated guess that the origin of the expression to designate the Christian religion as the "Way" came from John the Baptist's preaching on making ready the Way of the Lord. The circumstances of the conversion of Apollos are unknown.

18, 26: There is no adequate explanation concerning the precise state of the imperfect knowledge of Apollos about Jesus, nor for what is meant by: Priscilla and Aquila "expounded the Way of God to him more precisely."

18, 27: *Wrote to the disciples*: perhaps part of the early Church's organization was the issuance of letters of recommendation for Christians who traveled to unknown places.

19, 1: After Apollos left Ephesus (18, 24) and went to Corinth, Paul, having passed through Phrygia, north of Ephesus ("upper districts"), arrived at Ephesus.

Third Journey of St. Paul



- 2 and found certain disciples; | and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" But they said to him, "We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "How then were you baptized?" They said, "With John's baptism." | Then Paul said, "John baptized the people with a baptism of repentance, telling them to believe in him who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. There were about twelve men in all.
- 8 Now for three months he used to go to the synagogue and speak confidently, holding discussions and trying to persuade them about the kingdom of God. But when some were obstinate and refused to believe, speaking evil of the Way before the community, he left them and withdrew his disciples from them, and held daily discussions in the school of one Tyrannus. Now this went on for two years, so that all who lived in the province of Asia, both Jews and Gentiles, heard the word of the Lord. And God worked more than the usual miracles by the hand of Paul; | so that even handkerchiefs and aprons were carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.
- 13 But certain of the itinerant Jews, exorcists, also attempted

19, 2-3: These half Christian "disciples" (v. 1) and "believers" (v. 2) who had only received John's baptism (v. 3) were in the same position that Apollos had found himself (18, 25).

19, 2: *We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit*: these disciples had not heard of the effusion of the Holy Spirit's charismatic gifts, nor of his existence.

19, 5-6: Paul does not baptize them (v. 5) but he confirms them (v. 6)—as Peter and John did in similar situations in Samaria (8, 14).

19, 5: *Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*: see Mt 28, 9 n.

19, 6: *To speak in tongues*: to speak ecstatically (see 2, 4-13 n).

19, 9: *The school of one Tyrannus*: Tyrannus seems to have been a Greek teacher who taught in the mornings. In the afternoons, a time of siesta and leisure, he lent his "hall" to Paul. In the hours before noon, Paul probably plied his trade as a tent maker.

19, 10: *Two years*: Paul wrote 1 Cor during his sojourn at Ephesus that lasted "for three years" (20, 31). *Asia*: see 16, 6 n.

19, 12: *Handkerchiefs*: they were large in those days, and country people in some lands still use such large handkerchiefs. *Aprons were carried away*: as a tent maker, Paul wore an apron. The cult of using relics may have one of its foundations here.

19, 13: *Exorcists*: this type of non-Christian exorcists, the oldest example known so far, is mentioned only here in the New Testament.

- to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits in them, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom
 14 Paul preaches." And a certain Sceva, a Jewish high priest,
 15 had seven sons who were doing this. But the evil spirit answered and said to them, "Jesus I acknowledge, and Paul
 16 I know, but who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was sprang at them and overpowered them both with such violence that they fled from that house tattered and bruised.
 17 And this became known to all the Jews and Gentiles living in Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name
 18 of the Lord Jesus came to be held in high honor. And many of those who believed kept coming, and openly con-
 19 fessed their practices. And many who had practised magical arts collected their books and burnt them publicly; and they reckoned up the prices of them, and found the sum to be
 20 fifty thousand pieces of silver. Thus mightily did the word of the Lord spread and prevail.
 21 After all this, Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and to go to Jerusalem, saying
 22 "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." | So he sent two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed on for a while in the province of Asia.
 23 Now at that time there arose no small commotion about
 24 the Way. For a silversmith named Demetrius, by making silver shrines of Diana, brought no small gain to the crafts-

19, 14: *A Jewish high priest*: of a high priestly family.

19, 16: *Both*: perhaps the seven (v. 14) attempted exorcism but only two were attacked.

19, 18: Many Christians admitted their superstitious magical practices, not sins, and therefore this is not sacramental confession.

19, 19: *Their books*: the "Ephesian Letters" contained magical formulas which were known all over the Greco-Roman world. *Fifty thousand pieces of silver*: the piece of silver referred to here equates one day's wage for a laborer; it is not the same as the silver shekel (see Mt 27, 3 n). The crusade of publicly destroying their books of magical formulas was the result of the beating described in v. 16.

19, 21: This verse apparently epitomizes the rest of Acts. *In the Spirit*: some critics omit the phrase or translate it differently.

19, 22: *Erastus*: "the city treasurer" of Corinth (Rom 16, 23). He is mentioned in 2 Tm 4, 20. Some archeologists claim to have found at Corinth an inscription that refers to him. *Asia*: see 16, 6 n.

19, 23-40: The theater riot is one of the most glowing verbal paintings in Acts.

19, 23: *The Way*: the Christians (see 9, 2 n).

19, 24: *Silver shrines of Diana*: miniature temples with the figure of the goddess inside were made of cheap materials, e.g., terra cotta,

- 25 men; | and these he got together, along with workmen of like occupation, and said, "Men, you know that our wealth
 26 comes from this trade; | and you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but almost over the whole province of Asia, this man Paul has persuaded and turned away numbers of people, saying, 'Gods made by human hands are not gods at
 27 all.' And there is danger, not only that this business of ours will be discredited, but also that the temple of the great Diana will be regarded as nothing, and even the magnificence of her whom all Asia and the world worship
 28 will be on the decline." On hearing this they were filled with wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."
 29 And the city was filled with confusion, and they rushed by a common impulse into the theatre, dragging along the Macedonians Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's fellow-travellers.
 30 But when Paul wanted to go before the people, the disciples
 31 would not let him; | and some of the Asiarchs who were

and of precious metals as well. Some of the former kind have been excavated. On "the temple of the great Diana" see 19, 27 n.

19, 25: Demetrius seems to have handed out orders to skilled workers ("craftsmen," v. 24) and unskilled laborers ("workmen," v. 25).

19, 27: *The temple of the great Diana*: the Roman goddess Diana is the equivalent of the Greek goddess Artemis. The Artemis of the Ephesians shares almost only the name with the classical Greek goddess. The Ephesian Artemis was not a virgin huntress, nor a moon goddess like the classical Artemis, but she was a goddess of fertility for man, beast, and vegetation.

The Ephesian Artemis was really the Asian great mother-goddess. She was worshiped not only in Ephesus but in nearly all Greek cities, Syria, southern Gaul, and Rome ("her whom all Asia and the world worship," v. 27). Foreign cults were introduced into her worship. According to a legend the origin of the temple goes back to 1100 B.C., before Ephesus was founded. In 559 B.C. the temple was remodeled with splendor, but it burned in 356 B.C.; its reconstruction began immediately. Pliny describes the temple as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was about two-thirds the size of St. Peter's basilica in Rome. The temple enjoyed the right of asylum.

19, 29: *Theatre*: a large open-air assembly place. Its ruins have been excavated. The theater could seat over 20,000 persons. *Gaius*: he is mentioned again in 20, 4. *Aristarchus*: a travel companion of Paul (20, 4) who stayed with Paul in prison (Col 4, 10).

19, 31: *Asiarchs*: the Asian cities were organized into a league to promote the cult of the Roman emperor. The Asiarchs, officers of the league, formed a link between the provinces and Rome. Archaeological evidence shows how correct Luke was in the use of this technical word. *Friends of his*: throughout Acts, Paul is depicted as having been on good terms with Greek and Roman officials.

friends of his, sent to him and begged him not to venture
 32 into the theatre. Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing
 and some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and
 most of them did not know why they had gathered to-
 33 gether. Then some of the crowd called upon Alexander,
 as the Jews were pushing him forward; and Alexander,
 motioning with his hand for silence, wanted to give an
 34 explanation to the people. But as soon as they saw that
 he was a Jew, they all with one voice for about two hours
 shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

35 But when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he
 said, "Men of Ephesus, what man indeed is there who does
 not know that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper
 36 of the great Diana and of Jupiter's offspring? Since there-
 fore this is undeniable, you ought to be calm and do nothing
 37 rash. For you have brought these men here who are neither
 38 guilty of sacrilege nor blasphemers of your goddess. There-
 fore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a
 complaint against anyone, court days are kept and there
 are proconsuls; let them take action against one another.
 39 And if you require anything further, it shall be settled in
 40 the lawful assembly. For we are even in danger of being
 accused of riot over today's uproar, since there is no culprit
 whom we can hold liable for this disorderly gathering."
 And with these words he dismissed the assembly.

20

¹ *Macedonia and Greece* Now when the tumult had ceased,
 Paul sent for the disciples and encouraged them; then
 2 he took leave of them and started for Macedonia. After

19, 33-34: *Alexander*: the Jews seemingly wanted Alexander to explain to the crowd that they were not to be identified with the Christians who harmed the trade of the silversmiths.

19, 35: *The town clerk*: the people's secretary. *A worshipper*: in Greek, a temple sweeper, a warden. Coins and inscriptions testify that Ephesus had the title of warden of the temple of Diana and of the emperor's cult. *Jupiter's offspring*: literally, "the image fallen from the sky." The statue of Diana was believed to have fallen from heaven. (In the opinion of many scholars it was a meteorite.) There existed parallel pagan beliefs in other parts of the ancient world. Diana was commonly sculptured with multiple breasts covering her entire body, and with a turret-crown on her head.

19, 38: *Proconsuls*: those who presided at court.

19, 40: *Accused*: by the Roman authorities. The Greek text reads, "there being not a single reason that we shall be able to give for this gathering."

- travelling through those parts and giving them much encouragement, he came to Greece. When he had spent three months there and was about to sail for Syria, a plot was laid against him by the Jews; so he resolved to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him Sopater of Beroea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of the province of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These, having gone in advance, waited for us at Troas; | but we ourselves sailed from Philippi after the days of the Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined them at Troas, and there we stayed seven days.
- 7 Troas** And on the first day of the week, when we had met for the breaking of bread, Paul addressed them, as he was to leave the next morning, and he prolonged his address until midnight. Now there were many lamps in the upper room where we had assembled. And a young man named Eutychus, who was sitting at the window, was overcome with drowsiness and, as Paul addressed them at great length, he went fast asleep and fell down from the third story to the ground and was picked up dead. Paul went down to him and laid himself upon him, and embracing him, said, "Do not be alarmed, life is still in him." Then he went up and broke bread and ate, and having spoken to them a good while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they took away the boy alive and were not a little comforted.
- 13** But we went on board the ship and sailed for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. That was the arrangement he had made, as he intended to travel there by land. So

20, 4: *Sopater*: see 17, 12 n. Aristarchus and Gaius are mentioned in 19, 29. *Secundus*: means "second" son. His name appears only here. *Tychicus*: means "lucky." Tychicus delivered two of Paul's letters (Eph 6, 21f; Col 4, 7ff). *Trophimus*: means "foster son." He is mentioned again in 21, 29.

20, 5—21, 18: A "we" passage (see Introduction to Acts).

20, 6: *Days of the Unleavened Bread*: see 12, 2-3 n.

20, 7: *The first day of the week*: there is a dispute concerning the expressions "next morning" and "midnight." Did the gathering take place on Saturday night or on Sunday night? If the meeting was on Saturday night, the computation of time would be Jewish, and would mean from 6:00 P.M. Saturday to the same time next day. *Breaking of bread*: the celebration of the Holy Eucharist as in v. 11, "broke bread" (see 2, 42 n).

20, 13: *Assos*: thirty-five miles from Troas by sea and about twenty by land.

when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came
 15 to Mitylene. Sailing from there, we arrived on the following
 day off Chios; the next day we made Samos, and the day
 16 after we reached Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail
 past Ephesus, lest he should be delayed in the province
 of Asia; for he was hastening to be in Jerusalem, if it were
 possible for him, by the day of Pentecost.

17 *Discourse at Miletus* From Miletus, however, he sent
 18 to Ephesus for the presbyters of the church; | and when
 they had come to him and were assembled, he said to them:
 "You know in what manner I have lived with you
 all the time since the first day that I came into the
 19 province of Asia, | serving the Lord with all humility
 and with tears and in trials that befell me because of
 20 the plots of the Jews; | how I have kept back nothing that
 was for your good, but have declared it to you and taught
 21 you in public and from house to house, | urging Jews and
 Gentiles to turn to God in repentance and to believe in
 22 our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I am going to
 Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, not knowing what will
 23 happen to me there; | except that in every city the Holy
 Spirit warns me, saying that imprisonment and persecution
 24 are awaiting me. But I fear none of these, nor do I count
 my life more precious than myself, if only I may accom-
 plish my course and the ministry that I have received from

20, 17-38: Paul's only speech in Acts addressed to Christians is a model of how he spoke as a pastor of souls. It is a speech of defense against his opponents in the ministry and a farewell address. Vv. 22-27 may or may not allude to his martyrdom. Paul recalls his pastoral life in Asia Minor (vv. 18-27) and offers recommendations (vv. 28-35).

20, 17: *Miletus*: Ephesus is about thirty-five miles away. *The presbyters*: the Greek word *presbuteros* is used interchangeably with *episcopos* ("bishops") in v. 28. Actually, both Greek terms mean only priests in the modern sense of the word. See Ti 1, 5-7; 1 Tm 3, 1-7; Phil 1, 1. Only after New Testament times do we see the word *episcopos* used in the modern sense of a residential monarchical bishop. The twelve apostles and Paul were equivalent to modern bishops insofar as they ordained priests. See e.g., 1 Tm 5, 22.

20, 18: *And were assembled*: not in the Greek.

20, 21: *Christ*: not in the Greek.

20, 22-27: See 20, 17-38 n.

20, 23: *The Holy Spirit warns me*: through prophets?

20, 24: *But I fear none of these*: not in the Greek. *Nor do I count, etc.*: in Greek, "But I do not hold my life in any account as being dear to me."

the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And now, behold, I know that you all among whom I went about preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no longer. Therefore I call you to witness this day that 26 I am innocent of the blood of all; | for I have not shrunk 27 from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. 28 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will get in 29 among you, and will not spare the flock. And from among your own selves men will rise speaking perverse things, 30 to draw away the disciples after them. Watch, therefore, and remember that for three years night and day I did not cease with tears to admonish every one of you.

32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, who is able to build up and to give the inheritance among all the sanctified. I have coveted no one's 33 silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have provided for my needs and those of my 34 companions. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling you ought to help the weak and remember the word of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 Having said this, he knelt down and prayed with them 37 all. And there was much weeping among them all and 38 they fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, | being grieved most of all at his saying that they would no longer see his face. And they escorted him to the ship.

21

¹ *Tyre* And when we had parted from them and had set

20, 25: If the pastoral epistles may be used as an argument, Paul's statement proved wrong because he visited Ephesus.

20, 28: *Bishops*: see 20, 17 n.

20, 31: *For three years*: see 19, 10 n.

20, 34: Paul was a tent maker by trade. See 18, 3.

20, 35: *Remember the word . . . 'It is more blessed . . .'*: this saying is not included in any of the Gospels. It is not clear whether it is spoken by Paul, or whether it is an addition of Luke's. The saying is found in works of later Christian writers, and Epicurus parallels it with: "To do well is not only better than to fare well, but also more pleasant."

20, 38: *No longer see his face*: see 20, 25 n.

sail, we made a straight course and came to Cos, and the
 2 next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. There we
 found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, and we went on
 3 board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and leaving it to
 the left, we sailed for Syria and landed at Tyre, for there
 4 the ship was to unload her cargo. Having looked up the
 disciples, we stayed there seven days. And they told Paul
 5 through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem. But when our time
 was up we left there and went on, and all of them with
 their wives and children escorted us till we were out of the
 6 city; and we knelt down on the shore and prayed. And
 having said farewell to one another, we went on board the
 ship and they returned home.

7 *Ptolemais and Caesarea* After completing the voyage
 from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais where we greeted the
 8 brethren and spent a day with them. The next day we
 departed and came to Caesarea, where we went to the house
 of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and
 9 stayed with him. He had four daughters, virgins, who had
 10 the gift of prophecy. And while we were staying on there
 for some days, there came down from Judea a certain
 11 prophet named Agabus. Coming to us, and taking Paul's
 girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus
 says the Holy Spirit: The man whose girdle this is the Jews
 will bind like this at Jerusalem, and they will deliver him
 12 into the hands of the Gentiles." On hearing this, we our-
 selves and the people there begged him not to go to
 13 Jerusalem. Then Paul answered and said, "What do you
 mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not
 only to be bound but even to die at Jerusalem for the name
 14 of the Lord Jesus." And when we could not persuade him,
 15 we acquiesced and said, "The Lord's will be done." After
 this we made our preparations and went our way to Jerusalem.
 16 And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us,
 taking with them Mnason, a Cypriot, an early disciple,
 whose guests we were to be.

21, 4: *Through the Spirit*: see 13, 2 n.

21, 8: *Philip . . . one of the seven*: "deacons" is understood (see 6, 5).

21, 10: *Agabus*: most probably the same as in 11, 27f.

21, 11: The prophecy in action (like those of the Old Testament prophets, e.g., Ez 4, 1-3) is substantially fulfilled in 21, 30ff (see 28, 17). The prediction of Agabus agrees with the faithful at Tyre (v. 4).

21, 16: *Mnason, a Cypriot, an early disciple*: Mnason is otherwise

IV. IMPRISONMENT IN PALESTINE

- 17 *Jerusalem* On our arrival at Jerusalem the brethren gave
 18 us a hearty welcome. On the next day Paul went with us
 19 to James, and all the presbyters came in. After greeting
 them, he related in detail what God had done among the
 Gentiles through his ministry.
- 20 They praised God when they heard it and they said
 to him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of be-
 lievers there are among the Jews, all of them zealous up-
 21 holders of the Law. Now, they have heard about thee that
 thou dost teach the Jews who live among the Gentiles to
 depart from Moses, telling them they should not circumcise
 22 their children nor observe the customs. | What then? The
 multitude is sure to assemble, for they will hear that thou
 23 hast come. | So do what we tell thee. We have four men
 24 who are under a vow; | take them and sanctify thyself along
 with them, and pay for them that they may shave their
 heads; and all will know that what they have heard of
 thee is false, but that thou thyself also observest the Law.
- 25 But as for the Gentile believers, we ourselves have written
 our decision that they abstain from idol offerings and from
 blood and from what is strangled and from immorality."
- 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day after being
 purified along with them he entered the temple and an-
 nounced the completion of the days of purification, when
 the sacrifice would be offered for each of them.
- 27 *Paul's Arrest* But when the seven days were almost over,
 the Jews from the province of Asia, seeing him in the
 temple, stirred up all the people and seized him, shouting,

unknown. He was a disciple of the Church at Jerusalem where he
 was host to Paul and his companions. Many believe that Mnason is
 one of the "Cyprians" mentioned in 11, 20 and therefore is here called
 "an early disciple." The distance from Caesarea to Jerusalem was sixty-
 five miles.

21, 18: *James*: see 12, 2-3 n.

21, 23-26: Paul is counseled to take the vow (see 18, 18 n) and
 thus show the Jews that he still observes the Mosaic Law.

21, 25: See 15, 19-20 n.

21, 27: *The Jews from the province of Asia*: Paul was recognized
 by these Jews from abroad who were especially careful about the
 observance of the Mosaic Law because it was the Law itself that
 distinguished them most from the surrounding pagans. (Paul mini-
 mized the observance of the Law.)

- 28 "Men of Israel, help. This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people and the Law and this place, and moreover he has brought Gentiles also into the temple
29 and has desecrated this holy place." For they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him and they
30 supposed that Paul had taken him into the temple. And the whole city was thrown into confusion, and the people ran together, and seizing Paul, they proceeded to drag him out of the temple; whereupon the doors were immediately shut.
31 They were trying to kill him, when news reached the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in a tumult. And
32 he, immediately taking soldiers and centurions, ran down to them; and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they
33 stopped beating Paul. Then the tribune came up and seized him and ordered him to be bound with two chains, and in-
34 quired who he was and what he had been doing. Some in the crowd shouted one thing, and some another, and as he could not learn anything certain on account of the tumult,
35 he ordered him to be taken into the barracks. And when he came to the steps, he was actually being carried by the sol-
36 diers owing to the violence of the crowd; | for the mass of the people followed, shouting, "Away with him!"
37 And as Paul was about to be taken into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to thee?" He
38 said, "Dost thou know Greek? | Art not thou the Egyptian who recently stirred up to sedition and led out into the
39 desert the four thousand assassins?" But Paul said to him, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. But I beg thee, give me leave to speak to the people."
40 He gave him leave, and Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people and when they had become quiet he addressed them in Hebrew, saying:

21, 28-30: Under penalty of death, Gentiles were forbidden to penetrate beyond the Court of the Gentiles. The "doors" of the Court were shut by the temple police or Levites. *Trophimus*: he is mentioned in 20, 4.

21, 31-35: The barracks (v. 34) were situated in the Fortress Antonia overlooking the temple grounds to which it was joined by "the steps" (v. 35).

21, 37-38: The tribune thought Paul was the Egyptian leader of the assassins and was surprised to hear him speak Greek. This incident of the 4,000 "dagger men" is mentioned by the historian Josephus.

22

- ¹ *Discourse to the People* "Brethren and fathers, listen to what I have to say to you in my defense."
- ² And when they heard him speak to them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet.
- ³ And he said: "I am a Jew, and I was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but was brought up here in this city, a pupil of Gamaliel, and instructed according to the strict acceptance of the Law of our fathers. I was zealous for the Law just as all
- ⁴ of you are today. And I persecuted this Way even to the death, binding and committing to prisons both men and
- ⁵ women, | as the high priest can bear me witness, and all the elders. In fact I received letters from them to the brethren in Damascus, and I was on my way to arrest those who were there and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.
- ⁶ "And it came to pass that, as I was on my way and approaching Damascus, suddenly about noon there shone round
- ⁷ about me a great light from heaven; | and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why
- ⁸ dost thou persecute me?' And I answered, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom
- ⁹ thou art persecuting.' And my companions saw indeed the light, but they did not hear the voice of him who was
- ¹⁰ speaking to me. | And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there thou shalt be told of all that thou art destined to do.'
- ¹¹ And as I could not see because of the dazzling light, my companions had to lead me by the hand, and so I reached Damascus.
- ¹² "Now one Ananias, an observer of the Law, respected by
- ¹³ all the Jews who lived there, | came to me and, standing beside me, said to me, 'Brother Saul, regain thy sight.' And
- ¹⁴ instantly I looked at him. And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed thee beforehand to learn his will and to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth;
- ¹⁵ | for thou shalt be his witness before all men of what thou

22, 2: *Hebrew*: Aramaic.

22, 3-21: For its parallel account see 9, 3-9 n.

22, 3: *Gamaliel*: see 5, 34. *Zealous for the Law*: in Greek, "zealous for God."

22, 4: *Way*: Christians and their manner of life.

22, 9: *Did not hear the voice*: see 9, 7 n for discrepancy.

16 hast seen and heard. | And now why dost thou delay? Get up and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.'

17 "And it came to pass that, when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I was in an ecstasy

18 | and saw him as he said to me, 'Make haste and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.'

19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that I used to imprison and beat in one synagogue after another

20 those who believed in thee; | and when the blood of Stephen, thy witness, was shed, I was standing by and approved it, and took charge of the garments of those who killed him.'

21 And he said to me, 'Go, for to the Gentiles far away I will send thee.' "

22 **Paul's Citizenship** Now, till he said this they were listening to him, but then they lifted up their voice and shouted, "Away from the earth with such a one! for it is not right that he should live." And as they were shouting and throwing off their garments and casting dust into the air, the tribune ordered him to be taken into the barracks and to be scourged and tortured that he might find out why they shouted so against him.

23 But when they had bound him with the straps, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it legal for you to scourge a Roman, and that without a trial?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and reported, saying, "What art thou about to do? This man is a Roman citizen." Then the tribune came and said to him, "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" And he said, "Yes." And the tribune answered, "I obtained this citizenship at a great price." And Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." At once therefore

22, 16: *Calling on his name*: see Mt 28, 9 n.

22, 21-22: The Jewish mob breaks out in violence probably because Paul says that God's message is also for the Gentiles.

22, 23: *Throwing off their garments and casting dust into the air*: disorderly acts without any significance.

22, 25: Paul appeals to the *Lex Porcia* (which prohibited corporal punishment of a Roman citizen in the provinces) and to the *Lex Julia* (which guaranteed a Roman citizen the right to a fair trial).

22, 27: The method of how one had to prove his Roman citizenship in the provinces of the empire is not known.

22, 28: It is not known how Paul's parents obtained Roman citizenship.

22, 29: Information is scant about the privileges enjoyed by Roman citizens in the provinces.

those who had been going to torture him left him; and the tribune himself was alarmed to find that Paul was a Roman citizen, and that he had bound him.

- 30 The next day, as he wished to find out the real reason why he was accused by the Jews, he loosed him and ordered the priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble; and taking Paul forth, he placed him in front of them.

23

- 1 *The Sanhedrin* Then Paul, looking steadily at the Sanhedrin, said, "Brethren, I have conducted myself before God with a perfectly good conscience up to this day." But the high priest Ananias ordered those who were standing by him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God will strike thee, thou whitewashed wall. Dost thou sit there to try me by the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?" But the bystanders said, "Dost thou insult God's high priest?" And Paul said, "I did not know, brethren that he was the high priest; for it is written, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people.'"
- 6 Then Paul, knowing that part of them were Sadducees and part of them Pharisees, cried out in the Sanhedrin "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; it is about the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial."
- 7 And when he said that, there arose a dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the multitude was divided.
- 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are no angels or spirits, whereas the Pharisees believe in both. So there was a great uproar, and some of the Pharisees got up and began to insist, saying, "We find no evil in this man; what if a spirit has really spoken to him, or an angel?"
- 10 And as the dispute was becoming violent, the tribune, fearing lest Paul should be torn to pieces by them, ordered the soldiers to come down and take him by force from among them

22, 30: Puzzling to scholars is the legality of this convocation of the Sanhedrin by an ordinary Roman tribune.

23, 2: *Ananias*: he was named high priest about 47 A.D. Ananias probably ordered this blow because Paul pleaded innocent.

23, 5: It is better to interpret that Paul's quotation (from Ex 22, 27) had an ironic intent, rather than to claim that Paul suffered from poor eyesight.

23, 6: *The hope*: of the Messiah.

23, 9: *Some of the Pharisees*: In Greek, "some of the Scribes of the party of the Pharisees."

11 and bring him into the barracks. But on the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be steadfast; for just as thou hast borne witness to me in Jerusalem, bear witness in Rome also."

12 *A Conspiracy* Now when day broke, some Jews assembled and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they 13 would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. There 14 were more than forty that had made this conspiracy; | and they went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great curse to taste nothing 15 until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do you, with the Sanhedrin, suggest to the tribune that he bring him to you as though you mean to look into his case more carefully; but we are ready to kill him before he gets here."

16 Now the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush, and 17 he came and entered the barracks and told Paul. Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, "Take this young man 18 to the tribune, for he has something to report to him." So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man 19 to thee, for he has something to say to thee." So the tribune took him by the hand, and going aside with him, asked him, 20 "What is it that thou hast to tell me?" And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring Paul to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, on the plea that they intend to have a more 21 thorough investigation made into his case. But do not believe them; for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him, having bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they have killed him; and they are now ready, only waiting for thy promise."

22 *To Caesarea* The tribune therefore let the young man go, charging him not to divulge to anyone that he had given him 23 this information. Then he called two centurions and said to them, "Get ready by the third hour of the night two hundred soldiers to go as far as Caesarea, and seventy cavalry 24 and two hundred spearmen; | and provide beasts to mount 25 Paul and take him in safety to Felix the governor." [For he was afraid that the Jews might seize him by force and kill

23, 11: Two other apparitions of encouragement are described in 18, 9 and 27, 24.

23, 23: *The third hour of the night: 9:00 P.M.*

him, and he himself should afterwards be slandered, as though he intended to receive money.]

26 And he wrote a letter in these terms: "Claudius Lysias to
27 His Excellency Felix the governor, greeting. Whereas this man had been seized by the Jews and was on the point of being killed by them, I came on them with the troops and
28 rescued him, having learnt that he was a Roman. And wishing to know what charge they had preferred against him,
29 I took him down into their Sanhedrin. I found him accused about questions of their Law, but not of any crime deserving of
30 death or imprisonment. And when I was told of an ambush which they had prepared for him, I sent him to thee, directing his accusers also to state the case before thee. Farewell."

31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their instructions, took
32 Paul and conducted him by night to Antipatris; | and the next day they returned to the barracks, leaving the cavalry to
33 go on with him. When they reached Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and also handed Paul over to him.
34 On reading it he asked from what province he was; and
35 learning that he was from Cilicia, | "I will hear thee," he said, "when thy accusers have come." And he ordered him to be kept in Herod's palace.

24

1 *The Accusation* Now five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some of the elders and one Tertullus, an attorney; and they presented their case against Paul before the governor. When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

"Whereas we live in much peace through thee, and whereas
3 many reforms are in progress by thy foresight, | we always and everywhere receive them, most excellent Felix, with all
4 thankfulness. But not to detain thee too long, I entreat thee
5 to be kind enough to grant us a brief hearing. We have found this man a pest, and a promoter of seditions among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the

23, 31: *Antipatris*: about forty-two miles north of Jerusalem. Since an open plain stretched from there to Caesarea, the foot soldiers returned.

23, 35: *Herod's palace*: the residence of the governor. The erection of this royal palace and of an adjoining prison was part of the twelve-year rebuilding program of Caesarea by Herod the Great.

24, 1: *Ananias*: see 23, 2. *Tertullus*: otherwise unknown. It is not clear whether he was a Roman or a Jew.

6 sedition of the Nazarene sect. He even tried to desecrate the temple, but we caught him [and wished to judge him according to our Law. But Lysias, the tribune, came upon us and with great violence took him away out of our hands, | 8 ordering his accusers to come to thee]. By examining him thyself, thou wilt be able to discover all these things we charge 9 him with." And the Jews also supported the charge, saying that this was so.

10 *The Defense* Then when the governor nodded to him to speak, Paul answered, "As I know that for many years thou hast been a judge for this nation, I shall answer for myself 11 with good courage. For thou canst take as certain that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in 12 Jerusalem; | and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with anyone or creating a disturbance among the people, nor in the synagogues, | nor about the city; neither can they prove to thee the charges that they now make against 14 me. But this I admit to thee, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, so I serve the God of my fathers; believing 15 all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets, | having a hope in God which these men themselves also look for, that there is to be a resurrection of the just and unjust; | 16 and in this I too strive always to have a clear conscience before God and before men.

17 "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifice and fulfill vows; | in which they found me engaged in the temple, after having been purified, 19 with no crowd or disturbance at all. But there were some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to have been here before thee and to have presented their charges, if they 20 had any, against me; | or else let these men themselves say what they found wrong in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin, | unless it be for the one thing I shouted out as I stood among them, "It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am being judged by you this day.' "

24, 6: *Tried to desecrate the temple*: see 21, 28.

24, 14: *Sect*: a reference to "Nazarene sect" (v. 5).

24, 15: *A hope*: of the resurrection.

24, 16: *In this*: hope of the resurrection.

24, 17: *To offer sacrifice*: a probable reference to 18, 18. *And fulfill vows*: not in the Greek.

24, 19: *Some Jews from the province of Asia*: a reference to 21, 27.

24, 21: A reference to 23, 6.

- 22 *The Prisoner* Felix, however, having precise information about the Way, adjourned the trial, saying, "When Lysistratus the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." And he instructed the centurion to keep Paul in custody but to allow him some liberty, and not to prevent any of his friends from looking after him.
- 24 Now some days later, Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard what he had to say about the faith in Christ Jesus. But as he talked of justice and chastity and the judgment to come, Felix became alarmed and answered, "For the present go thy way but when I get an opportunity, I will send for thee." At the same time he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul, and for this reason he would send for him often and talk with him. But after two years Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and as he wanted to ingratiate himself with the Jews, Felix left Paul in prison.

25

- 1 *Festus* Festus accordingly entered his province, and three days afterwards he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. And the chief priests and Jewish leaders presented their charge against Paul, and begged him, asking it as a favor against Paul, that he would have him fetched to Jerusalem. Meanwhile they were laying an ambush to kill him on the way. But Festus answered that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself would be going there shortly.
- 3 "Let, therefore, your influential men go down with me," he said, "and if there is anything wrong with the man, let them present charges against him."
- 6 After staying among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul brought in. And when he was fetched, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him and brought many serious charges against him, which they were unable to prove. Paul said in his own defense, "Neither against the Law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I committed any

24, 24: *Drusilla*: daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and sister of Herod Agrippa II and Bernice.

24, 27: Felix left office in 60 A.D. Festus succeeded him and ruled until the year 62.

25, 8: *Against the temple*: see 21, 28.

- 9 offense." But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Art thou willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?"
- 10 But Paul said, "I am standing at the tribunal of Caesar; there I ought to be tried. To Jews I have done no wrong,
- 11 as thou thyself very well knowest. For if I have done any wrong or committed a crime deserving of death, I do not refuse to die. But if there is no ground to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them; I appeal to
- 12 Caesar." Then Festus, after conferring with the council, answered, "Thou hast appealed to Caesar; to Caesar thou shalt go."
- 13 *Agrippa* And after an interval of some days, King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.
- 14 And as they were staying there several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a certain man left a
- 15 prisoner by Felix, | and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews presented their case against
- 16 him, and asked for his conviction. But I told them that Romans are not accustomed to give any man up before the accused has met his accusers face to face and has been given a
- 17 chance to defend himself against the charges. Therefore, when they had assembled here, I lost no time, but on the following day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be

25, 9: Festus wished to please the Jews who wanted Paul tried by the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (v. 3). Since Paul was a Roman citizen, Festus could not force him to appear before the Sanhedrin and, therefore, he offered Paul personal surveillance over the trial ("before me").

25, 10-12: Paul must have suspected that he would be in serious danger if he appeared before the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, and he must have also suspected that Festus would turn against him. Festus probably planned to allow the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem to find Paul guilty and (since Festus could not legally preside over the trial) decide the final verdict against Paul, yet proclaim his own official verdict against Paul on political insurrectionist charges. Paul knew that his condemnation by the Sanhedrin would place him in an unfavorable position before Festus. Therefore, as a Roman citizen, the apostle chose the last court of appeal, the emperor. The very fact that Festus permitted this (v. 12) proved that Paul was still being tried on "political" charges, that is, for having caused rioting "among the Jews throughout the world" (Acts 24, 5) and because of the temple incident (see 21, 28-30 n).

25, 13: *Agrippa*: Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod mentioned in 12, 1 and brother of Bernice. Bernice's husband was the nephew of Philo the philosopher. After 70 A.D. she became the mistress of the emperor Titus.

25, 15-16: These verses explain v. 3.

18 brought in. But when his accusers got up, they did not charge
 19 him with any of the crimes that I had expected. But they
 had against him certain questions about their own religion
 and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but who Paul affirmed
 20 was alive. Being at a loss as to how to investigate such
 matters, I asked him if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and
 21 be tried on these charges there. But when Paul entered an appeal
 to have his case reserved for the decision of Augustus, I
 ordered him kept in custody till I could send him to Caesar.
 22 And Agrippa said to Festus, "I myself also could have
 wished to hear the man." "Tomorrow," said he, "thou shalt
 hear him."
 23 So the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great
 pomp and entered the audience hall with the tribunes and
 principal men of the city, and by order of Festus Paul was
 24 brought in. And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all men here
 present with us, you see this man about whom the whole
 multitude of the Jews pleaded with me at Jerusalem and
 here, insisting and crying out that he ought not to live any
 25 longer. But I, for my part, found that he had done nothing
 deserving of death. But as he himself made the appeal,
 26 I decided to send him to Augustus. Still I have nothing definite
 to write to my lord about him. So I have brought him
 forth before you, and especially before thee, King Agrippa,
 that after an examination of him has been made I may
 27 have something to put in writing. For it seems to me unreasonable
 to send a prisoner without stating the charges
 against him."

26

1 *Paul's Discourse* Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Thou art
 permitted to speak for thyself." Then Paul stretched forth
 his hand, and began his defense.

2 "I think myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am to
 defend myself today before thee against all the accusations
 3 of the Jews, | especially as thou art well acquainted with all
 the Jewish customs and controversies; I beg thee therefore to
 listen to me with patience.

4 "My life, then, from my youth up, the early part of which

25, 20: Festus describes the case in a light favorable to himself. However, according to v. 9, his reason for sending Paul to Jerusalem was "to do the Jews a favor."

25, 24ff: This seems more like a semiofficial inquiry than a formal trial.

- was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem, all the
⁵ Jews know; | for they have long known me, if only they
 are willing to give evidence, that according to the strictest sect
⁶ of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now for the hope in
 the promise made by God to our fathers I am standing trial;
⁷ | to which promise our twelve tribes hope to attain as they
 worship night and day; and it is about this hope, O king,
⁸ that I am accused by the Jews. Why is it deemed incredible
 with you if God does raise the dead?
⁹ "And I then thought it my duty to do many things con-
¹⁰ trary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I did in
 Jerusalem; and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having
 received authority from the chief priests to do so; and when
¹¹ they were put to death, I cast my vote against them; | and
 oftentimes in all the synagogues I punished them and tried to
 force them to blaspheme; and in my extreme rage against
 them I even pursued them to foreign cities.
¹² "But while I was journeying on this business to Damas-
¹³ cus with authority and permission from the chief priests, | at
 midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven
 brighter than the sunshine round about me and my com-
¹⁴ panions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying
 to me in Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?
¹⁵ It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.' | And I said,
 'Who art thou, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom
¹⁶ thou art persecuting. But rise and stand upon thy feet; for
 I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to appoint thee to
 be a minister and a witness to what thou hast seen, and to
¹⁷ the visions thou shalt have of me; | delivering thee from the
 people and from the nations, to whom I am now sending
¹⁸ thee, | to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness
 to light and from the dominion of Satan to God; that they
 may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among
 those sanctified by faith in me.'
¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the
²⁰ heavenly vision; | but first to the people of Damascus and
 Jerusalem, and then all over Judea and to the Gentiles, I set

26, 6: *The hope*: for the Messiah.

26, 7: *Twelve tribes*: the only use of this phrase in the New Testament.

26, 9-20: See 9, 3-9 n for the parallel accounts.

26, 14: *It is hard for them to kick against the goad*: a Greek proverb, which means that resistance is futile. A similar saying is found in Euripides' *Bacchae*, 794-5.

26, 16: On the discrepancies see 9, 15-16 n.

about declaring that they should repent and turn to God
 21 doing works befitting their repentance. This is why the Jews
 22 seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. But aided to the
 day by the help of God, I stand here to testify to both high
 and low, saying nothing beyond what the Prophets and Moses
 23 said would come to pass: | that the Christ was to suffer, that
 he first by his resurrection from the dead was to proclaim
 light to the people and to the Gentiles."

24 **The Result** While he was saying this in his defense, Festus
 said with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art mad; thy great learn-
 25 ing is driving thee to madness." "I am not mad, excellent
 26 Festus," said Paul, "but I speak words of sober truth. | For
 the king knows about these things and to him also I speak
 without hesitation. For I am sure that none of these things
 27 escaped him; for none of them happened in a corner. Dost
 thou believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that thou
 28 dost." But Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short while thou
 29 wouldst persuade me to become a Christian." And Paul
 answered, "I would to God that, whether it be long or short,
 not only thou but also all who hear me today might become
 30 such as I am, except for these chains." Then the king arose
 and the governor and Bernice, and those who had sat with
 31 them; | and after withdrawing they kept talking the matter
 over together, saying, "This man has done nothing to deserve
 32 death or imprisonment." And Agrippa said to Festus, "This
 man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed
 to Caesar."

V. IMPRISONMENT IN ROME

27

1 **Departure for Rome** Now when it was decided that he
 should sail for Italy, and that Paul, with the other prisoners,
 should be turned over to a centurion named Julius, of the
 2 Augustan cohort, | we went on board a ship of Adramyti-
 thium which was bound for the ports of the province of Asia,

26, 32: Throughout Acts, Luke makes Paul innocent in the eyes of the Roman officials. He proclaims Paul innocent at least six times. However, see 25, 10-12 n.

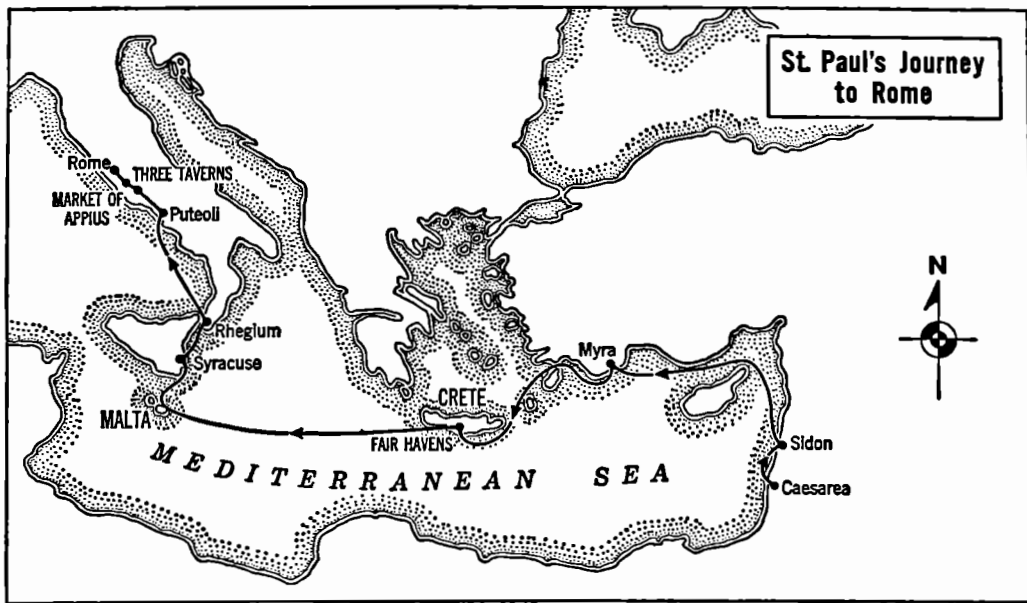
27—28: This passage has been called one of the best sea tales from antiquity (without impugning its historicity).

27, 1—28, 16: A "we" passage (see Introduction to Acts).

27, 1: *He should sail*: in Greek, "we should sail."

27, 2: *Aristarchus*: he is mentioned in 20, 4.

**St. Paul's Journey
to Rome**



and set sail; Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, being one of our party.

3 The next day we reached Sidon and Julius treated Paul kindly, allowing him to go to his friends and receive attention. And putting to sea from there, we passed under the lee of Cyprus, as the winds were against us, | and sailing over the sea that lies off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we reached Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy and put us on board her.

7 For many days we made slow progress and had difficulty in arriving off Cnidus. Then as the wind kept us from going on, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone, | and coasting along it with difficulty we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Thalassa.

9 But as much time had been spent and navigation was now unsafe, for the Fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, | saying to them, "Men, I see that this voyage is threatening to bring disaster and heavy loss, not only to the cargo and the ship, but to our lives also." But the centurion gave more heed to the pilot and the captain than to what Paul had to say; | and as the harbor was unsuitable for wintering in, the majority favored sailing from there to try whether they could get to Phoenix, a harbor in Crete facing southwest and northwest, to winter there. So when a light south wind sprang up, thinking they had secured their object, they weighed anchor and ran close along the coast of Crete.

14 *A Storm* But not long afterwards a violent wind called Euroaquoilo burst against it; | and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way and were driven along. We ran under the lee of a small island called Cauda, where we managed with difficulty to secure the boat; 17 | after hoisting it on board, they used supports to undergird the ship, and as they were afraid of being driven on the Syrtis quicksands, they lowered the mainsail and so were driven along. As we were being tossed about by the violence of the storm, the next day they threw some of the cargo overboard; and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship's gear overboard. As neither sun nor stars

27, 9: *The Fast*: of the Day of Atonement, about September 15. Navigation was considered dangerous after this date.

27, 14: *Euroaquoilo*: a "northeaster."

were visible for many days and no small storm was raging, all hope of our being saved was in consequence given up.

- 21 Then, when they had eaten nothing for a long time, Paul got up in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should indeed have listened to me and not have sailed from Crete, thus
22 sparing yourselves this disaster and loss. And now I beg you to be of good cheer, for there will be no loss of life among
23 you, but only of the ship. For last night an angel of the God
24 I belong to and serve, stood by me, | saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar; and behold,
25 God has granted thee all who are sailing with thee.' So, men, be of good cheer; for I have faith in God that it will be as
26 it has been told me. But we are to reach a certain island."

- 27 *Shipwreck* It was the fourteenth night, and we were sailing in the Adria, when about midnight the sailors began to
28 suspect that they were drawing near to some land. On taking soundings, they found twenty fathoms, and a little further
29 on they found fifteen; | then fearing that we might go on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and
30 longed for daylight. But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, pretending that they were going to cast anchors from the bow, |
31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these
32 men remain in the ship, you cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and let her drift off.
33 And when it began to grow light, Paul begged them all to take food, saying, "This is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly on the watch and fasting, without taking
34 anything to eat. So I beg you to take some food for your safety; for not a hair from the head of any one of you shall
35 perish." With these words he took bread and gave thanks to
36 God before them all and broke it and began to eat. Then all
37 became more cheerful and took food themselves. Now, we
38 were in all two hundred and seventy-six souls on board. And after eating their fill, they proceeded to lighten the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

27, 24: See 23, 11 n.

27, 28: *Twenty fathoms*: 120 feet. *Fifteen (fathoms)*: ninety feet.

27, 33: The fourteen days of fasting must not be taken literally.

27, 35: Since there were three Christians on board (v. 2) and 273 non-Christians (v. 37), Paul's giving thanks to God (after the breaking of the bread) was not a thanksgiving after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist but more probably a Jewish thanksgiving said at meals (see 2, 42 n).

39 When day broke they could not make out the land; but the
 noticed a bay with a beach, and they proposed to run th
 40 ship ashore there if they could. So they slipped the anchor
 and committed themselves to the sea, at the same time un
 lashing the fastenings of the rudders; and hoisting the fore
 41 sail to the breeze, they made for the beach. But we struc
 a place open to two seas, and they ran the ship aground. Th
 prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern be
 42 gan to break up under the violence of the sea. Now th
 soldiers planned to kill the prisoners lest any of them shoul
 43 swim ashore and escape, | but the centurion, wishing to sav
 Paul, put a stop to their plan. He ordered those who coul
 44 swim to jump overboard first and get to land, | and they
 brought the rest in, some on planks and others on variou
 pieces from the ship. And so it came to pass that all got
 safely to land.

28

1 *Malta* After our escape we learned that the island was
 2 called Malta. And the natives showed us no little kindness,
 for they kindled a fire and refreshed us all because of the
 3 rain that had set in, and the cold. Now Paul gathered a
 bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, when a viper
 came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand.
 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand,
 they said to one another, "Surely this man is a murderer, for
 though he has escaped the sea, Justice does not let him live."
 5 But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no
 6 harm. Now they were expecting that he would swell up
 and suddenly fall down and die; but after waiting a long
 time and seeing no harm come to him, they changed their
 minds and said that he was a god.
 7 Now in the vicinity there were estates belonging to the
 head man of the island, whose name was Publius, and he
 received us and entertained us hospitably for three days.
 8 And it happened that the father of Publius was laid up with
 fever and dysentery; but Paul went in, and after praying and
 9 laying his hands on him, he healed him. After this all the

27, 40: The Greek reads, "So they slipped the anchors and left them in the sea."

28, 2: *Natives*: in Greek, "foreigners," which means people who did not speak Greek. The Maltese spoke a Phoenician dialect.

28, 4: *Justice*: the Maltese speak here of justice as a goddess.

28, 8: *Laying his hands*: the Old Testament gesture in healing the

10 sick on the island came and were cured; | and they honored us with many marks of honor, and when we sailed, they provided us with such things as we needed.

11 *To Rome* We set sail after three months in an Alexandrian ship with the Twins on her figurehead, which had wintered
12 at the island. We put in at Syracuse, and stayed there three
13 days. Then, following the coast, we reached Rhegium; and one day later a south wind sprang up, and on the second
14 day we arrived at Puteoli, | where we found brethren and were entreated to stay with them seven days; and so we
15 came to Rome. And the brethren there, having had news of us, came as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns; and when Paul saw them, he gave thanks to God
16 and took courage. On our arrival at Rome, Paul was given permission to live by himself with a soldier to guard him.

17 *At Rome* Three days later he called together the leading Jews, and when they had assembled he said to them, "Brethren, although I have done nothing against the people or against the customs of our fathers, yet I was handed over to
18 the Romans as a prisoner from Jerusalem. After an examination they were ready to release me, since I was innocent of
19 any crime that deserved death; | but as the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any charge to bring against my nation. This, then, is why I asked to
20 see you and speak with you. For it is because of the hope
21 of Israel that I am wearing this chain." But they said to him, "We ourselves have received no letters about thee from Judea, and none of the brethren, upon arrival, has reported
22 or spoken any evil of thee. But we want to hear from thee what thy views are; for as regards this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 So they fixed a day, and very many came to him at his lodging; and to them he explained the matter, bearing wit-

sick (9, 12 and 17) was also used for the bestowal of tasks (6,6), for communicating the Holy Spirit (8, 16-17; 19, 6), and for dispatching missionaries (13, 3).

28, 11: The images of Castor and Pollux, the patrons of sailors, were on the ship's prow. The "Twins" were popularly honored in Egypt as gods.

28, 15: *The Market of Appius*: forty miles from Rome. *Three Taverns*: thirty miles from Rome.

28, 20: *The hope of Israel*: of the resurrection realized in Christ, as in 23, 6 and 26, 6 and 8.

- ness to the kingdom of God and trying from morning till evening to convince them concerning Jesus from the Law
24 of Moses and from the Prophets. And some believed what
25 was said; and some disbelieved; | and as they could not agree among themselves, they began to depart, when Paul added this one word: "Well did the Holy Spirit speak
26 through Isaias the prophet to our fathers, saying, 'Go to this people and say: With the ear you will hear and will not understand; and seeing you will see and will not perceive.
27 For the heart of this people has been hardened, and with their ears they have been hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest perhaps they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them.'
28 "Be it known to you therefore that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen to it."
29 [When he had said this, the Jews departed, having much argument among themselves.]
30 And for two full years he remained in his own hired lodg-
31 ing; and he welcomed all who came to him, | preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and unhindered. Amen.

ST. PAUL AND HIS EPISTLES

About the time when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, St. Paul was born in Tarsus (Acts 22, 3), the seaport city on the Cydnus river, twelve miles inland from the Mediterranean. Traders from Mesopotamia sailed from Tarsus to their various destinations. Tarsus was not only a cosmopolitan center, it was also a university city that competed with Athens and Alexandria. One of the more famous Tarsian Stoic philosophers was Athenodorus whose thoughts were quoted by Cicero and Seneca.

Paul was born of Jewish parents. Saul (which means "desired") was his Hebrew name; Saulos ("waddler") his Greek name; Paulus ("small") his Latin name. He was reared according to a strict Jewish way of life (Phil 3, 4-6). As a Jew of Hellenistic extraction he spoke Greek and Aramaic; his knowledge of Greek philosophy, literature, and culture was superficial. The young Pharisee came to Jerusalem after the death of Christ. It is speculated that Paul's whole family moved to Jerusalem after his sister married and came to live there (Acts 23, 16). Paul studied under the famous teacher Gamaliel. The general assumption that Paul came from a wealthy family is compatible with his trade as a tent maker (Acts 18, 3) since lawyers and rabbis did not accept money for tutoring or for giving advice on the Law.

There is no reliable information about Paul's physical appearance in any authoritative writings. Nothing certain may be deduced concerning his stature from the mere fact that Paulus means "small," and from his having been lowered down the wall in a basket (2 Cor 11, 33). The description given by his enemies, "his bodily appearance is weak" (2 Cor 10, 10), is not very helpful either. However, from pictorial art (in the catacombs, for instance), which is a bit more reliable than apocryphal writings on the apostle, there emerges a type. Paul is depicted as long-necked, with a thin face accentuated by a pointed black beard, and almost bald.

PAUL'S WRITINGS

To classify Paul's writings with precision is difficult. They cannot be called letters, apart from his message to Philemon, because they are not personal enough. To classify them as epistles in the technical sense is inexact because they are not written in a formal style and not directed to the public in general. Hence, some specialists prefer to describe them as "open letters" or "moral treatises in epistolary form" like the letters of Seneca.

Paul seems to have followed the three methods common to the writing of letters in his day. One method was dictation to a professional scribe since papyrus was coarse and the process of writing slow.

It is probable that at intervals of weeks and months more than one scribe was employed. These intervals may explain in part the shift in mood and style noticeable in the apostle's writings. A final greeting added in his own hand, was the equivalent of our signature. The signature is found in three letters (1 Cor 16, 21; Col 4, 18; 2 Th 3, 17). The second customary way was to personally write the entire letter. Most scholars deduce from Phlm 1, 19 that the only Pauline example of this method is his writing to Philemon. A third method of Greco-Roman letter writing was to entrust it to a secretary who was furnished with ideas, orally or in a written outline, but the style and vocabulary would then belong to the secretary more than to the sender of the letter. This type of writing may have been used for Ephesians and for the pastoral epistles (1, 2 Tm; Ti).

The apostle's writings followed a uniform pattern. First there was a superscription that comprised his name, his title ("apostle"), the name of the recipient(s), and a greeting. Then there was an act of thanksgiving, which introduced the subject matter. This was followed by the body of the subject matter. In conclusion, the final greeting.

Some general characteristics of Paul's style are its conversational tone, its impetuosity, exuberance, and unwieldy sentences. (If it be true that "the style is the man," a precious insight into the apostle's character is here afforded.) Some special characteristics are the following: 1. Paul's question-and-answer dialogues between himself and a fictitious opponent. (Specialists dispute whether this literary device is due to the Stoic diatribe method or to the rabbinic method.) 2. Paul's disturbing manner of sentence structure. He begins a sentence and breaks off suddenly. (See Gal 2, vv. 4 and 6; Rom 5, 12-13.) 3. Paul's imagery, which comes from the Old Testament, from city life and sometimes from the world of sports. His vocabulary is rich and varied. Of 2,478 words he used, 816 are not in other books of the New Testament. He employs many conjunctions, particles, neologisms, Aramaic expressions, and synonyms.

The best epitome of the apostle's style is found in the frequently quoted words of Moellendorff: "Paul's Greek has nothing to do with any school or with any model, but streams awkwardly with precipitous bubbling right out of the heart; but it is real Greek."

MYTHS

Several myths have been woven about Paul and his life, which should be disposed of. The first myth is that he borrowed many ideas and words from the Stoic philosophers. Studies within the last fifty years have made abundantly clear that these "borrowings" were not thoughts peculiar to the Stoic philosophers but were common to other Greek and even Jewish writers. Moreover, Paul's favorite source was the Greek (Sep.) Bible, not the Hebrew Bible. His use of this source led to a second myth, this one spun about Paul's method of inter-

preting the Old Testament. The apostle's method was that of an inspired religious genius. It was not the method of any particular school of his day in Palestine or outside of Palestine. Although it has often been stressed that Paul learned his "rabbinic" method at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22, 3), it is now admitted that he learned the rabbinic method only superficially. His interpretations of the Old Testament never bear the stamp of any school other than his own. Besides, the Palestinian rabbis of his day were not allegorists but literalists. Hence, the allegorical interpretation of Agar and of Mount Sinai (Gal 4, 21-31) should not be ascribed to Paul's "rabbinic" schooling. A third myth is that Paul had a synthetic grasp of biblical theology. His writings have been said to be only occasional expressions of this synthetic knowledge. The apostle most probably was not endowed with synthetic knowledge. It is more accurate to think of him as a poet-missionary rather than as a Jewish Aquinas. There is a fourth myth, which would have it that Paul repudiated his Jewish background to become a Christian and put himself in absolute opposition to Judaism. This was not so at all. In his mind, he and any of his fellow Christians were the only authentic Jews. The Church, according to Paul, was the new and true Israel that God had always intended to evolve from ancient Israel (Rom 9—11). A fifth myth has maintained that Paul was always unjustly persecuted by the Jews. Wherever the apostle went he seemed to have caused a riot or a revival. As to his causing these riots, was it always the Jews who were completely in the wrong? Or could it be that the impetuous Paul antagonized the Jews by expecting to make too many converts too soon?

THE BODY OF CHRIST

One of the theological ideas permeating Pauline literature, and the one that has been interpreted differently in recent years, is the idea of the body of Christ. The long-standing opinion states: what Paul meant by the "body of Christ" is a collectivity of Christians united with Christ in a supernatural society. In recent years, however, scholars have shown that nowhere does Paul use the term "Christ" or the expression "the body of Christ" to mean a *moral entity* that would embrace both, Christ personally and the body of the faithful who are united with him. The apostle always speaks of Christ as an individual Being. With "body (*soma*) of Christ" Paul always means the real, the historical resurrected (body of) Christ, the living body-person who reigns in heaven. It is Christ's physical body to which Christians are closely joined. His body, being a spiritual and life-giving body (1 Cor 15, 45), transmits life to us. These scholars claim that "*soma*" in Greek never denotes a social group but always a real physical body. For example, in the well-known description of all the charisms that come from the one Spirit (1 Cor 12, 1-11), Paul does not stress the diversity of

members, but their unity. "For in *one* Spirit we were all baptized into *one* body . . . we were all given to drink of *one* Spirit (1 Cor 12, 13). Again, when Paul describes the interdependence of the parts of the human body (1 Cor 12, 17-26), he intends to show how close the "soma"—body-person of the Christians—is to the "soma"—body-person of Christ—and not that Christians and Christ are united in social collectivity.

To Paul, the union between Christ and the Christians is a dynamic union charged with power principally in baptism (Rom 6, 3-11; 1 Cor 6, 11-12; 12, 13) and in the Eucharist (1 Cor 10, 16f; 11, 24-30). The newer interpretation emphasizes the realism of the union between the individual Christian and Christ. It thereby contributes a clear insight into the nature of the bond that joins Christians to one another.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS INTRODUCTION

St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans at Corinth in 58 A.D. There is hardly anyone who doubts his authorship.

Before his visit to the Christians in the Eternal City, the apostle took the opportunity to explain calmly and extensively some problems on which he had been reflecting for a long time. Among these problems were: justification; salvation through faith in Christ (these two problems he had only a short while earlier elaborated on in his Epistle to the Galatians); the precise purpose of the Mosaic Law; the true notion of Christian liberty; the role of the unbelieving Jews; and specific moral matters. However, in spite of his uncommonly orderly treatment of these subjects, Paul never intended to write a synthesis of the Christian religion.

Little is known about the conditions of the Christian community in Rome, and just as little about the introduction of the Christian religion in Rome and about the foundation of the Roman church. Deeper probing scholars do not take seriously the lesser known "tradition" that Barnabas first preached the Gospel in Rome, nor the more widely known "tradition" that St. Peter introduced the Gospel there in 42 A.D.

The assumption that the Roman Jews who returned after Pentecost in 30 or 33 A.D. to introduce Christianity in Rome, and a remark in the *Life of Claudius* by Suetonius, are the only two indications of when the Christian religion was introduced in Rome. According to this Roman historian, the emperor (Claudius) had expelled the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. (see Acts 18, 2 n) because of their riots "at the instigation of Chrestus." (An erroneous spelling of Christus—Christ.) It seems, however, that Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, were Christians before the edict of Claudius forced them to leave Rome. Hence, the Christian religion had been introduced in the capital of the empire at least before 49 A.D. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, the city had had a Christian community for a long time (Rom 1, 8).

It is disputed whether the Christians at Rome were mostly Jewish or Gentile Christians. At the time of Herod's persecution, which began in 64, the Roman historian Tacitus spoke of the Christians as a "great multitude."

The unity of the Epistle to the Romans is questioned only by way of conjecture relative to chs. 15—16 (see 15, 1-33 n; 16, 3-16 n).

Main divisions of the dogmatic part of this epistle according to themes:

I. *The Justice of God*, 1—4

- A. This theme is developed through the opposite theme of the anger of God revealed through the universality of sin, 1, 17
 - 1. The anger of God against the pagans, 1, 18-32.
 - 2. The anger of God against the Jews, 2, 1—3, 20
 - 3. The justice of God, announced in 1, 17, is itself developed, 3, 21-31
 - 4. The scriptural proof of God's justice, 4, 1-25

II. *The Love of God*, 5—11

- A. This theme is announced, 5, 1-11
- B. The love of God saves men from:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Original sin, 5, 12-21 2. Death, 6, 1-23 3. The Mosaic Law, 7, 1-25 	}	The theme of God's love developed through three opposing themes.
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- C. The theme announced in 5, 1-11 is developed. (After the obstacles of sin, death, and the Mosaic Law have been overcome, the love of God is the foundation of salvation), 8, 1-39
- D. Scriptural proofs of God's love expressed in Israel's final redemption, 9—11

Main divisions of the epistle according to the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine translation are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-17

Doctrinal

The Gospel, the power of God for the salvation of all who believe

- 2. Humanity without Christ, 1, 18—3, 20
- 3. Salvation through faith in Christ, 3, 21—4, 25
- 4. The superabundance of this justification, 5, 1-21
- 5. Justification and the Christian life, 6—8
- 6. The problem of the rejection of Israel, 9—11

Moral

- 7. The duties of Christians, 12, 1—15, 13
- 8. Conclusion, 15, 14—16, 27

1

1 Greeting Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an
 2 apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, | which he had
 3 promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scrip-
 4 tures, | concerning his Son who was born to him according
 5 to the flesh of the offspring of David; | who was foreor-
 6 dained Son of God by an act of power in keeping with the
 7 holiness of his spirit, by resurrection from the dead, Jesus
 8 Christ our Lord, | through whom we have received the
 9 grace of apostleship to bring about obedience to faith among
 10 all the nations for his name's sake; among whom are you
 11 also called to be Jesus Christ's—to all God's beloved who are
 12 in Rome, called to be saints: grace be to you and peace from
 13 God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 Commendation and Desire to Visit Them First I give
 9 thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, be-
 10 cause your faith is proclaimed all over the world. For God is
 11 my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his

1, 1-7: Paul's greeting is more extensive here than in his other letters.

1, 1: Paul presents his credentials that qualify him to address the Romans. *Paul*: all the Pauline letters begin with the apostle's name. *Servant*: the word in Greek means slave. Unlike the Jews, the Greeks did not think of themselves as slaves, not even as slaves of God.

1, 2: *Set apart for the gospel*: appointed to preach the gospel. *Promised . . . prophets*: Paul stresses the early Christian teaching that Christ's saving acts were predicted by the prophets.

1, 3-4: *According to the flesh . . . his spirit*: some scholars suggest that this passage is a fragmentary formula of an ancient Christian creed.

1, 3: *His Son*: Paul identifies the Son at the end of v. 4: "Jesus Christ our Lord." *The flesh*: the word "*sarx*" used in Greek does not here mean body as opposed to the soul, but human nature as in Jn 1, 14, "the Word was made flesh." (See Mt 26, 26 n.)

1, 4: *Foreordained*: the word in Greek does not mean predestined but constituted or designated. Moreover, "constituted" does not mean that Jesus was made the Son of God, since he already was God's Son before he became man, but that he was constituted the Son of God "by an act of power" *befitting his divine nature* ("in keeping with the holiness of his spirit.") The first manifestation of that power was Jesus Christ's "resurrection from the dead."

1, 5: *Grace and apostleship*: through Jesus the mediator, Paul received the grace of conversion and of the apostolate.

1, 8: The statement is not totally exaggerated because many Christians were already in Rome when Paul arrived there.

- 10 Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, | always in
 11 ploring in my prayers that somehow I may at last by God
 12 will come to you after a safe journey. For I long to see you
 13 that I may impart some spiritual grace unto you to strengthen
 14 you, | that is, that among you I may be comforted together
 15 with you by that faith which is common to us both, your
 and mine.
- 13 *Why He Wishes to Visit Them* Now I would not, brethren,
 14 have you ignorant, that I have often intended to come to
 15 see you (and have been hindered until now) that I may pro-
 16 duce some results among you also, as well as among the res-
 17 of the Gentiles. To Greeks and to foreigners, to learned and
 18 unlearned, I am debtor; | so, for my part, I am ready to
 19 preach the gospel to you also who are at Rome.
- 16 *Theme of the Epistle* For I am not ashamed of the gospel
 17 for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who
 18 believes, to Jew first and then to Greek. For in it the justice
 19 of God is revealed, from faith unto faith, as it is written,
 20 "He who is just lives by faith."

1, 16: *I am not ashamed of the gospel*: an understatement. Paul means that he is proud of the Gospel. *Greek*: here it means the heathens. The entire expression, "to Jew first and then to Greek," is known among scholars as "the privilege of the Jews." The Jews, prepared by monotheism and by the prophecies of the Old Testament should have normally been led to accept Christ. Of all the converts to Christianity the Jews alone did not have to abandon numerous errors (see Acts 13, 46).

1, 17: The Gospel is a divine force that generates salvation (v. 16) because in the Gospel "the justice of God is revealed," i.e., the Gospel says that God justifies man through faith, and in justifying man he saves man. *Justice of God*: this may be considered a quality in God that exacts reparation for sin and saves man. God is faithful to his promise of salvation made in the Covenant at Sinai. According to another opinion, the justice of God may be considered in the effect attained through it, namely: the remission of sins, and the infusion of a new life. This opinion is more commonly accepted than the first. The first opinion holds that the Gospel reveals the just and merciful activity of God in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Through God's activity, by the sacrifice of the cross, the reparation of man's sins is effected, and justice and a new life are dispensed through Christ's mediation.

In other words, the Gospel illumines for us the justice of God, highlighting his activity in imparting justice to man to save him (first opinion) rather than the effect (justice) attained through his activity, i.e., through Christ's mediation (second opinion). However, God's activity in imparting justice to man and the effect attained through his activity work closely together for man's salvation.

From faith unto faith: from initial faith to an ever increasing faith.

I. DOCTRINAL

THE GOSPEL THE POWER OF GOD FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL WHO BELIEVE

I. HUMANITY WITHOUT CHRIST

- 18 *The Pagans Adore Idols* For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those
19 men who in wickedness hold back the truth of God, | seeing that what may be known about God is manifest to them.
20 For God has manifested it to them. | For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen—his everlasting power also and divinity—being understood through the things that are made. And so they are without excuse, |

or, from a sinner to a just man. "*He who is just lives by faith*": according to one interpretation of Hb 2, 4: it is by faith that the just man will live. Another interpretation is: he who is just in virtue of the faith will live. To Paul, faith is the origin and the nourishment of justice, yet faith is not an assent to a theoretical truth but a total commitment or gift of the entire person to God.

1, 18-32: The apostle does not speak of individuals of his acquaintance, nor of philosophers, nor even of all pagans throughout the world; he speaks solely of the Greco-Roman pagan society of the first century. His basic assertion is that this society should be capable of knowing God and of observing some fundamental principles of morality without an explicitly Jewish (Old Testament) or Christian (New Testament) revelation.

Paul exposes the religious errors of the pagans. A stream of sins flows from their error of refusing to know God and from their disobeying essential moral laws. The apostle's keen distinction between error and immorality is lacking in the catalogue of heathen vices frequently found in Stoic writings in Paul's day (see 1, 28-31 n.).

1, 18: The anger of God is his justice; it punishes sinful men according to the natural punishment which sin incurs. *Men . . . hold back the truth of God*: in a sense, sinners prevent that God's truth becomes known. *The truth of God*: means the knowledge of the true God (v. 19).

1, 19: God has made clear to men what may be known about him through natural intelligence without the aid of revelation.

1, 20: Creation is God's manifestation of himself to all mankind. Vatican Council I quotes this verse to affirm that mankind can arrive through "the things that are made" at a knowledge of their creator without the aid of revelation.

In Paul's mind, to arrive at the knowledge of God is not to see God as the first mover of the physical universe but as the source of all that is good in the world. This opinion among scholars is supported by

21 seeing that, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For 23 while professing to be wise, they have become fools, | and they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God for an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

24 *Punishment of Idolators* Therefore God has given them up in the lustful desires of their heart to uncleanness, so that 25 they dishonor their own bodies among themselves—they who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever, amen.

26 For this cause God has given them up to shameful lusts; for their women have exchanged the natural use for that 27 which is against nature, | and in like manner the men also, having abandoned the natural use of the woman, have burned in their lusts one towards another, men with men doing shameless things and receiving in themselves the fitting recompense of their perversity. And as they have resolved against 28 possessing the knowledge of God, God has given them up to a reprobate sense, so that they do what is not fitting; | being 29 filled with all iniquity, malice, immorality, avarice, wickedness; being full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity;

Paul's Semitic rather than Greek mentality, but especially by the Greek word "*theiotes*" ("divinity") which lends the meaning of goodness and wisdom to the expression "his everlasting power." Besides, "the things that are made" does not only refer to all things in the physical universe but also to everything in the moral world of man coming from God's Providence over men's personal lives and over the course of mankind's history. The experience of God's goodness in the moral world leads man to the God of goodness and does more to awaken man's moral obligations to his creator than contemplation of the physical universe that leads man more directly to the God of cosmic order.

1, 21: The natural knowledge acquired by men about God should have led to prayerful and cultic gratitude. Instead, men attributed God's gifts to their own abilities.

1, 27: See 1 Cor 6, 10 n.

1, 28-31: Commentators often divide the vices enumerated in this list into those against nature (vv. 24-27) and those against society (vv. 28-31). There are nine other similar lists of heathen vices in the New Testament. Scholars dispute whether Paul's lists of vices here and elsewhere derive from Old Testament lists of vices (e.g., Ex 20, 21-23, 19), from Jewish apocryphal writings (4 Mc 1-3) or from contemporary moralists (Diogenes' *Laertes* 7, 110-114).

1, 29: *Immorality*: not in the Greek text.

30 being whisperers, | detractors, hateful to God, irreverent,
 proud, haughty, plotters of evil; disobedient to parents, |
 31 foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without
 32 mercy. Although they have known the ordinance of God,
 they have not understood that those who practise such things
 are deserving of death. And not only do they do these things,
 but they applaud others doing them.

2

1 *All Will Be Rewarded or Punished* Wherefore, thou art
 inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art who judgest. For
 wherein thou judgest another, thou dost condemn thyself. For
 2 thou who judgest dost the same things thyself. And we know
 that the judgment of God is according to truth against those
 3 who do such things. But dost thou think, O man who judgest
 those who do such things and dost the same thyself, that
 4 thou wilt escape the judgment of God? Or dost thou despise
 the riches of his goodness and patience and long-suffering?
 Dost thou not know that the goodness of God is meant to
 5 lead thee to repentance? But according to thy hardness and
 unrepentant heart, thou dost treasure up to thyself wrath on
 the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment
 6 of God, who will render to every man according to his works.
 7 Life eternal indeed he will give to those who by patience in
 8 good works seek glory and honor and immortality; but wrath
 and indignation to those who are contentious, and who do
 9 not submit to the truth but assent to iniquity. Tribulation and
 anguish shall be visited upon the soul of every man who
 10 works evil; of Jew first and then of Greek. But glory and
 honor and peace shall be awarded to everyone who does
 11 good, to Jew first and then to Greek. Because with God there
 is no respect of persons.

12 *Gentiles to Be Judged by the Natural Law* For whoever
 have sinned without the Law, will perish without the Law;
 and whoever have sinned under the Law, will be judged by
 13 the Law. For it is not they who hear the Law that are just
 in the sight of God; but it is they who follow the Law that

1, 30: *Hateful to God*: in Greek, "hating God."

2, 1-11: Paul addresses the Jews, who sin themselves but condemn the pagans. The Jews will not escape final punishment because God does not make exceptions.

2, 12: The Jews who sinned outside the pale of the Mosaic Law will perish; those who violated the Law will be judged by it.

14 will be justified. When the Gentiles who have no law do by nature what the Law prescribes, these having no law are a
 15 law unto themselves. They show the work of the Law written in their hearts. Their conscience bears witness to them, even
 16 when conflicting thoughts accuse or defend them. This will take place on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the hidden secrets of men through Jesus Christ

17 *The Jews Transgress the Law* But if thou art called "Jew," and dost rely upon the Law, and dost glory in God,
 18 | and dost know his will, and dost approve the better things,
 19 being informed by the Law, | thou art confident that thou art
 20 a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, | an instructor of the unwise, a teacher of children, having in the
 21 Law the pattern of knowledge and of truth. Thou therefore who teachest another, dost thou not teach thyself? Thou who
 22 preachest that men should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou who sayest that men should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou who dost abominate idols, dost thou
 23 commit sacrilege? Thou who dost glory in the Law, dost
 24 thou dishonor God by transgressing the Law? "For the name of God," as it is written, "is blasphemed through you among the Gentiles."

25 *True Circumcision* Circumcision, indeed, profits if thou keep the Law; but if thou be a transgressor of the Law,

2, 14-16: The natural law.

2, 14-15: When the Gentiles who have no (written Mosaic) law do by the natural law what the Mosaic (Law) prescribes (i.e., the moral precepts dictated by reason), these Gentiles, who have no explicitly revealed law like the Mosaic Law, follow their own natural law. They thus show the existence of the natural law through the testimony of their conscience and their interior thoughts of accusing themselves for acting wrongly in a given instance or of acting correctly.

2, 16: *This will take place*: these words are not in the Greek text but have been added to show what the apostle means, namely: the justification of the Gentiles will take place at the final judgment when God will judge through Jesus Christ even the hidden motives of men's acts.

2, 17-24: This attitude of superiority taken by spiritual leaders of mankind was especially typical of Jews who lived outside of Palestine.

2, 18: *Approve the better things*: see Phil 1, 10 n.

2, 19: In the Greek, the sentence is incomplete.

2, 22: *Commit sacrilege?*: in Greek, "pillage temples." See an allusion to this crime in Acts 19, 37.

2, 24: See Is 52, 5.

²⁶ thy circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcised keep the precepts of the Law, will not his ~~un-~~
²⁷ circumcision be reckoned as circumcision? And he who is by nature uncircumcised, if he fulfill the Law, will judge thee who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of
²⁸ the Law. For he is not a Jew who is so outwardly; nor is
²⁹ that circumcision which is so outwardly in the flesh; | but he is a Jew who is so inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter. His praise is not from men but from God.

3

¹ *Objections Answered* What advantage then remains to
² the Jew, or what is the use of circumcision? Much in every respect. First, indeed, because the oracles of God were en-
³ trusted to them. For what if some of them have not believed? Will their unbelief make void the fidelity of God? By no
⁴ means! | For God is true, and every man is a liar, as it is written, "That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest be victorious when thou art judged."
⁵ But if our wickedness shows forth the justice of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts punishment?
⁶ (I speak after a purely human manner.) | By no means!
⁷ Otherwise, how is God to judge the world? | But if through my lie the truth of God has abounded unto his glory, why

2, 26: *The precepts of the Law*: the moral precepts of the natural law which are included in the Mosaic Law.

3, 1: Mere physical circumcision and mere outward adherence to the Mosaic Law does not save the Jews. Therefore, "What advantage . . ." etc.

3, 2: *The oracles of God*: the scriptures.

3, 3: *The fidelity of God*: a reference to the promises of salvation made by God in the Old Testament covenant at Sinai and to the prophets.

3, 4: *For God is true*: in Greek, "let God be true." "*Every man is a liar*": in comparison with God. A hyperbole from Ps 115, 11. *Justified . . . judged*: see Ps 50, 6 and the rest of the psalm for the psalmist's acceptance of God's judgment. In Paul's use of the psalm, on the other hand, God himself is judged to have kept his promises.

3, 5-6: Paul's fictionalized Jewish objector asks: if the unbelief of some Jews shows forth God's fidelity (vv. 3-4), why should they be punished for portraying God's justice (fidelity)? Is God unjust when he inflicts punishment on them? No, answers Paul. For, if the objector were correct, evil would then be good, the moral order would not exist, and God could not judge people because there would be no moral criterion to judge by.

3, 7-8: Another presentation of the ideas in vv. 5-6.

8 am I also still judged as a sinner? And why should we not as some calumniously accuse us of teaching, do evil that good may come from it? The condemnation of such is just.

9 *The Scriptures Attest Universal Sin* What then? Are we better off than they? Not at all. For we have argued that Jews and Greeks are all under sin, | as it is written, "The 11 is not one just man; | there is none who understand 12 there is none who seeks after God. All have gone astray together; they have become worthless. There is none who 13 does good, no, not even one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have dealt deceitfully. The 14 venom of asps is beneath their lips; | their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; 15 destruction and misery are in their ways. And the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 *This Concerns the Jews* Now we know that whatever the Law says, it is speaking to those who are under the Law; in order that every mouth may be shut, and the whole world may be made subject to God. For by the works of the Law no human being shall be justified before him, for through law comes the recognition of sin.

3, 8: *The condemnation of such is just*: it is not clear whether Paul directs these words to the "some who calumniously accuse us of teaching [evil]"—to which the apostle adds "why should we not do evil that good may come from it?"—or whether they are directed to those who live by the false principle that evil purposes justify the use of legitimate means.

3, 9-18: One of several ways of understanding the Greek text in v. 9 is: are circumcised Jews better off than the Gentiles? No (but see 3, 1 n), because both, Jews and Gentiles, have sinned abundantly; a scripture testifies (vv. 10-18.) Although originally only the Israelite figured in the scriptural citations, they have been adapted here to include the pagans. Some of the quotations are literal; some are free.

3, 10-12: See Pss 13, 1-3; 52, 2-4.

3, 13: See Pss 5, 11; 139, 4.

3, 14: See Ps 9, 7.

3, 15-17: See Is 59, 7.

3, 18: See Ps 35, 2.

3, 19: *The Law . . . the Law*: the Old Testament . . . the Mosaic Law. *In order that . . . subject to God*: in the light of the preceding scriptural argument (see 3, 9-18 n) the Jews ("every mouth may be shut") and Gentiles ("the whole world") are culpable before God.

3, 20: Paul seems to answer here this unexpressed question: may Israel not boast of having the Mosaic Law as a sufficient means of salvation? No, is Paul's reply. The Mosaic Law does not guarantee

II. SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

- 21 *Justice Comes through Faith in Christ* But now the justice of God has been made manifest independently of the
 22 Law, being attested by the Law and the Prophets; | the justice of God through faith in Jesus Christ upon all who believe.
 23 For there is no distinction, | as all have sinned and have
 24 need of the glory of God. They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, |
 25 whom God has set forth as a propitiation by his blood
 26 through faith, to manifest his justice, | God in his patience remitting former sins; to manifest his justice at the present time, so that he himself is just, and makes just him who has faith in Jesus.

salvation because mere knowledge of it gives only a knowledge of sin.

V. 20 does not contradict 2, 13. In the latter verse Paul means that the charitable ones who observe the Mosaic Law will be saved. In v. 20 he means that the uncharitable ones who observe the external requirements of the Mosaic Law will not be saved.

3, 21-22: Man is saved by faith in Jesus Christ as the divine redeemer, and not by the observance of the Mosaic Law.

3, 21: *Justice of God*: see 1, 17 n. *The Law and the Prophets*: a general term for the Old Testament.

3, 23: *All have sinned*: see 5, 12 n. *The glory of God*: the modern theological word for the Pauline term "glory" is "grace."

3, 24: *They are justified*: this means justification here and now, not justification at the final judgment to which, however, the present justification leads.

3, 25: *A propitiation*: the Greek word is *ilasterion*. The older commentators often considered this as an allusion to the golden cover of the ark of the covenant, in Hebrew called *kapporeth*. The cover was sprinkled by the high priest with the blood of the victim on the day of expiation (Ex 25, 17-23). Modern scholars do not agree with this allusion and interpret the *kapporeth* as an object sprinkled with the blood of victims not with that of the expiated victim. Therefore, the sense of v. 25 is that God presented Christ as an "instrument of expiation" (*ilasterion*) "by his blood" (a reference to the crucifixion).

Through a total commitment ("through faith") man appropriates the expiation offered by Jesus Christ for our sins. Thus, man passes from sin to justification. Moreover, God constituted Christ as an instrument of expiation "to manifest his justice" which not only exacts reparation for sins but also communicates sanctity to the believers.

3, 26: *God in his patience remitting former sins*: one solid opinion of this is: God constituted Jesus as an instrument of expiation to "manifest his justice at the present time" since during the time of his patience, i.e., before New Testament times, God permitted that man's sins remain unexpiated. *Remitting*: "passing over," in Greek.

27 **Justification Excludes Boasting** Where then is thy boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith independently of the works of the Law. Is God the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles also? Indeed of the Gentiles also. | For there is but one God who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through the same faith. Do we therefore through faith destroy the Law? By no means! Rather we establish the Law.

4

1 **Abraham Justified by Faith** What then shall we say that Abraham, our father according to the flesh, acquired? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has reason to boast, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as justice." Now to him who works, the reward is not credited as a favor but as something due. But to him who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the impious, his faith is credited to him as justice. Thus David declares the blessedness of the man to whom God credits justice without works:
7 "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; | blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not credit sin."

9 **Justified before Circumcision** Does this blessedness hold good, then, only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that unto Abraham faith was credited as justice. How then was it credited? When he was in the state of circumcision or in that of uncircumcision? Not in circumcision but in uncircumcision. | And he received the sign of circumcision as the seal of the justice of faith which he had while uncircumcised, in order that he may be the father of all who, while uncircumcised, believed, that to them also it may be credited as justice; | and the father of the circumcised,

3, 28: See Jas 2, 24 n on the apparent contradiction.

3, 31: *Rather we establish the Law*: on its true bases by showing that the Mosaic Law actually testified in favor of faith, as the example of Abraham (see 4, 1ff) illustrates.

4, 1-8: Abraham was not justified by works.

4, 3: See Gal 3, 6 n.

4, 7-8: See Ps 31, 1f. *Forgiven . . . covered . . . not credit*: three synonymous expressions.

4, 9-12: Abraham was not justified by circumcision.

4, 11: See Gn 17, 10-11.

not of those merely who are circumcised, but also of those who follow in the steps of the faith that was our father Abraham's while yet uncircumcised.

- 13 *Not Justified by the Works of the Law*** For not through the Law but through the justice of faith was the promise made to Abraham and to his posterity that he should be heir
14 of the world. For if they who are of the Law are heirs, faith
15 is made empty, the promise is made void. For the Law works wrath; for where there is no law, neither is there trans-
16 gression. Therefore the promise was the outcome of faith, that it might be a favor, in order that it might be secure for all the offspring, not only for those who are of the Law, but also for those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the
17 father of us all; | as it is written, "I have appointed thee the father of many nations."

He is our father in the sight of God, whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

- 18 *The Strength of His Faith*** Abraham hoping against hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was said, "So shall thy offspring be."
19 And without weakening in faith, he considered his own deadened body (for he was almost a hundred years old)
20 and the deadened womb of Sara; | and yet in view of the promise of God, he did not waver through unbelief but was
21 strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, | being fully aware that whatever God has promised he is able also to
22 perform. Therefore it was credited to him as justice.

- 23 *The Model of Our Faith*** Now not for his sake only was it
24 written that "It was credited to him," | but for the sake of us also, to whom it will be credited if we believe in him who

4, 13-16: Abraham was not justified by the Mosaic Law since it was instituted centuries after his time.

4, 14: See Gal 3, 18.

4, 15: *The Law works wrath*: the Law, in itself and apart from grace, does not aid to observe it and, consequently, the Law is an occasion for transgressions that are displeasing to God ("works divine wrath").

4, 17-25: Abraham was justified by faith, a type of our faith in Christ.

4, 17: See Gn 17, 5.

4, 18: See Gn 15, 5.

- 25 raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, | who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification.

III. THE SUPERABUNDANCE OF THIS JUSTIFICATION

5

1 *Christ's Death Assures Us Hope and Peace* Having been justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, | through whom we also have access by faith unto that grace in which we stand, and exult in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. And not only this, but we exult in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation works out endurance, | and endurance tried virtue, and tried virtue hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For why did Christ, at the set time, die for the wicked when as yet we were weak? For scarcely in behalf of a just man does one die; yet perhaps one might bring himself to die for a good man. But God commends his charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ's Death Assures Our Salvation Much more now that we are justified by his blood, shall we be saved through him from the wrath. | For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. And not this only, but we exult also in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

4, 25: Modern scriptural studies emphasize, what the liturgy has always taught, that the passion, death, and resurrection *taken together* have redeemed man. The resurrection (combined with the ascension) is not simply the reward of the passion and death of Christ. This modern emphasis is opposed to that of St. Anselm and his followers who accentuated the death of Christ as the payment of a debt owed by man to God because of original sin. See 1 Cor 15, 20 n.

5, 1-4: Justification through faith brings forth peace and hope.

5, 2: *In which we stand*: or, in which we are established. *Of the sons*: not in the Greek text.

5, 5-11: Hope rests on the love of God that has been manifested through the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

5, 6: In Greek, "While we were still helpless, at the set time Christ died for the wicked."

5, 8: *Commends*: in Greek, "proves" or "manifests."

- 12 *In Adam All Have Sinned* Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed unto all men because all have sinned
 13 —for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not
 14 imputed when there is no law; | yet death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of him who was to come.

5, 12: The benefits of redemption for all sinful men. *One man*: Adam. *Sin*: sin is here a personified power that is hostile to God and dominates (v. 21) the human race ("the world"). *Because all have sinned*: the difference of translation of the Greek *eph o* (here translated as "because") gives rise to two interpretations, one by the Latin Fathers and another by some modern scholars. The Fathers of the Latin Church translated *eph o* as "in whom," or "in which." Hence, their translation reads: "Death passed into all men in whom (Adam)—or in which (sin)—all have sinned." Consequently, the interpretation of the Latin Fathers is that all men sinned in the sin of Adam and all men share in the death penalty. The objection to this interpretation does not concern the doctrine taught, but it concerns the establishment of this doctrine on the basis of the translation of the Greek expression *eph o* into "in whom" or "in which." The expression *eph o* should be translated "because" just as *eph o* in 2 Cor 5, 4 and in Phil 3, 12 should be translated "because" even though, obviously, these two passages do not deal with Adam's sin. If, then, it is granted that *eph o* should be translated "because," the interpretation may follow that all men died *because* all men committed *actual* sins (see the following annotations). *Have sinned*: according to the opinion of many Catholics in line with that of the Latin Fathers, the sin implied here is the sin of Adam as representative-head of mankind. His one sin became the sin of all men and led to the death penalty for all men because of mankind's solidarity with him. A different opinion of some moderns holds that the sin implied here is to be understood as in 3, 23, namely, as the succession of individual sins throughout history, yet disassociated from Adam's sin. According to this opinion, all men die because they all have committed their own sins just as Adam committed his sin.

5, 13-14: The principal argument for the first opinion (see 6, 12 n for "have sinned") is found in these two verses wherein Paul explains sin as the cause of death. The argument is: the sole reason for death in the world is Adam's sin and every man's involvement in it. To incur the death penalty there was no need either for knowledge of that punishment or for actual sins. Besides, the individual actual sins of men did not suffice to explain that *all* men had to die. During the time between Adam and Moses (and the Mosaic Law) there was no promulgation of God's law in scripture which decreed that death would be the penalty for Adam's sin. Yet, some people died, from Adam to the time of Moses, who did not break a divine command (see Gn 2, 17) as Adam did ("who did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam"), for example, infants before the use of reason and therefore incapable of personal sins. Hence, they died because of the inescapable attachment of the death penalty to Adam's sin.

(Continued on page 526.)

15 *Grace and Life Superabound through Christ* But not like the offense is the gift. For if by the offense of the one the many died, much more has the grace of God, and the gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ, abounded
 16 unto the many. Nor is the gift as it was in the case of one man's sin, for the judgment was from one man unto condemna-
 17 tion, but grace is from many offenses unto justification. For if by reason of the one man's offense death reigned through the one man, much more will they who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of justice reign in life
 18 through the one Jesus Christ. Therefore as from the offense

A damaging objection to the example of the death of infants before the use of reason is the following: Paul does not seem to have this example of the infants in mind, for otherwise he would not have selected the pre-Mosaic era. This class of children, even after the time of Moses, was incapable of personal, actual sins. Consequently, according to some modern Catholics (see 5, 12 n for the second opinion under "have sinned"), Paul's words are to be understood in this sense: although people who lived from Adam to the time of Moses have sinned against their conscience, they did not sin against an expressed divine command (see Gn 2, 17)—they did not sin "after the likeness of the transgression of Adam" which entailed the death penalty. This opinion wants to show that the apostle is mainly preoccupied with the connection between sin and death. Paul begins with the principle that the death penalty must not be applied unless it is promulgated. However, during the intervening era from Adam to the time of Moses there was no divine decree that imposed the death penalty on sinners because of their actual sins. According to this opinion, death is the result of the human condition following Adam's sin. Paul is concerned with this fact, not with the theory to explain the manner of the transmission of sin and death from Adam to all men.

In conclusion, according to the first opinion, Paul speaks of what is known as the Catholic doctrine of original sin (see Gn 3, 18-19 n); according to the second opinion, Paul is simply not concerned with that question. However, his ideas expressed here have offered a basis for the later theological development on the doctrine of original sin.

5, 15-19: Paul compares the effects on mankind of Adam's influence (condemnation) and of Christ's influence (justification).

5, 15: *The grace of God . . . the grace of . . . Jesus*: both are one and the same grace.

5, 16: *Was from one man unto condemnation*: a suggested translation is: "following after one only sin, ended in condemnation." *But grace . . . justification*: the sense is: but grace follows after many offenses (the sin of Adam and the personal sins of other men) and leads to justification.

5, 17: *Death*: physical death considered as a penalty for sin.

5, 18-19: Through Adam's disobedience, human beings were constituted a sinful race; through Christ's obedience, human beings have been constituted a "justified" race.

5, 18: *Condemnation*: the penalty of physical death and the loss of eternal life.

of the one man the result was unto condemnation to all men, so from the justice of the one the result is unto
 19 justification of life to all men. For just as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted just.

20 *Purpose of the Law* Now the Law intervened that the offense might abound. But where the offense has abounded,
 21 grace has abounded yet more; | so that as sin has reigned unto death, so also grace may reign by justice unto life everlasting through Jesus Christ our Lord.

IV. JUSTIFICATION AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

6

1 *Christians Dead to Sin* What then shall we say? Shall
 2 we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!
 3 For how shall we who are dead to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all we who have been baptized into

5, 19: Adam is a popular example of what some scholars call a "corporate personality," which means that he is the individual representative who forms together with the group one single reality. Thus, the corporate personality may be viewed as the representative of the group (e.g., of the human race) or as the group (e.g., the human race) since the group is the extension of the individual (e.g., of Adam). Some scholars believe that at times the notion of a corporate personality in the Bible does not imply anything more than a moral union.

5, 20-21: Between the time of Adam and Christ (vv. 12-19) the Mosaic Law intervened temporarily.

5, 20: The Mosaic Law is viewed here as in 3, 20 as a positive command devoid of the grace to help people observe the Law. Furthermore, the Law in itself tended to multiply transgressions and make the people more culpable.

5, 21: *Death*: temporal and spiritual death.

6, 1: Since grace abounds more than sin (5, 20), "shall we continue in sin" so that God will show his goodness in forgiving us?

6, 2: *Dead to sin*: free from the influence of sin (because of grace that justifies man, i.e., makes man pass from the state of sin to the state of grace).

6, 3: Paul elaborates on the meaning of being "dead to sin." He evokes the symbolism of the baptismal rite through the word "baptized" (submerged in water). When the neophyte was immersed in water, the immersion symbolized burial or death with Christ; when the neophyte emerged, the emergence symbolized resurrection and life with Christ. With "all we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus," Paul tells the Romans that they have been "submerged" in Jesus, i.e., each of them has become in a real sense a part of him or

- 4 Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into death in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also. For we know that our old self has been crucified with him, in order that the body of sin may be destroyed, that we may no longer be slaves to sin; | for he who is dead is acquitted of sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live together with Christ; | for we know that Christ, having risen from the dead, dies now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life that he lives he lives unto God. Thus do you consider yourselves also as dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

another Christ. By this "submerging" the apostle means a loyal far more profound and effective than that of a loyal servant to his master.

Paul reminds the Romans that they were not only "baptized in Christ" but also "into his death" (i.e., into Christ precisely at the moment when he died to save man). This "saving moment" mysteriously realized in man at baptism. At that moment, in a real but mysterious way, all who have been baptized join Christ in his crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and, according to v. 4, in his new life of glory.

6, 4-11: In his words about the Christian life on earth, Paul probably views this earthly life as the beginning of the glorious resurrected life in heaven, and the glorious resurrected life in heaven as an extension of the Christian life on earth.

6, 4: *Just as Christ . . . newness of life*: the newly baptized, as he emerged from the water, symbolized Christ's resurrection and new life. *Christ has arisen*: literally, "Christ was raised up" (see Matt 8, 31 n).

6, 5: Without denying that Christ really arose from the dead many modern commentators interpret the "resurrection" in this text as the new life of the Christian on earth. However, Paul's final perspective of this new life on earth may well be that of the resurrected life in heaven.

6, 6: *Our old self*: a metaphorical expression for a person dominated by sin before having received baptism. *The body of sin*: the source of sin.

6, 7: A probable explanation is: just as physical death so does mystical death free man from sin.

6, 8: *Live together with Christ*: eternally.

6, 10: *He died to sin*: Christ not only died because of the power of sin but because he allowed sin to exercise its full power to claim his death. Yet, afterward sin can never again reach his body (v. 9) (Sin never tainted Christ's soul.)

¹² **The Reign of Sin** Therefore do not let sin reign in your
¹³ mortal body so that you obey its lusts. And do not yield
 your members to sin as weapons of iniquity, but present your-
 selves to God as those who have come to life from the
 dead and your members as weapons of justice for God;
¹⁴ | for sin shall not have dominion over you, since you
 are not under the Law but under grace.

¹⁵ **Slavery to Sin** What then? Are we to sin because we are
¹⁶ not under the Law but under grace? By no means! Do you
 not know that to whom you offer yourselves as slaves for
 obedience, to him whom you obey you are the slaves,
 whether to sin unto death, or to obedience unto justice?
¹⁷ But thanks be to God that you who were the slaves of
 sin have now obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine
¹⁸ into which you have been delivered, | and having been
 set free from sin, you have become the slaves of justice.
¹⁹ I speak in a human way because of the weakness of your
 flesh; for as you yielded your members as slaves of uncleanness
 and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members
²⁰ as slaves of justice unto sanctification. For when you were
²¹ the slaves of sin, you were free as regards justice. But
 what fruit had you then from those things of which you
 are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death.
²² But now set free from sin and become slaves to God,
 you have your fruit unto sanctification, and as your end,
²³ life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift
 of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.

7

¹ **Christians Freed from the Law** Do you not know,
 brethren (for I speak to those who know law), that the Law

6, 12-23: A moral exhortation.

6, 13: *Members*: not only the limbs but all the faculties of man.

6, 14: Paul intimates: if they were still under the Mosaic Law they would be under the influence of sin because the Law in itself offered no aid to observe it. *Grace*: the freedom of the Gospel.

6, 17: *Delivered*: instructed.

6, 19: *Justice unto sanctification*: the meaning is: after the passage from sin to grace ("justice") by baptism, grow in the development of this justice by living a Christian life.

7, 1-25: The Christian life is, for a Jew, a liberation from the Mosaic Law (see 7, 6 n).

7, 1-4: Just as a wife "is set free from the law of the husband" when he dies, so is the Jew freed from the Mosaic Law when he becomes a Christian (see 7, 6 n).

- 2 has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by the Law while her husband is alive; but if her husband die, she is set free from the law of the husband. Therefore while her husband is alive she will be called an adulteress if she be with another man; but if her husband dies, she is set free from the law of the husband, so that she is not an adulteress if she has been with another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also, through the body of Christ, have been made to die to the Law, so as to belong to another who has risen from the dead, in order that we may bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in our members so that they brought forth fruit unto death. But now we have been set free from the Law, having died to that law by which we were held down, so that we may serve in a new spirit and not according to the outworn letter.

7 *The Law the Occasion of Sin* What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? By no means! Yet I did not know sin save

7, 3: *Of the husband*: not in the Greek text.

7, 4: *Through the body of Christ*: through Christ's crucifixion. *Die to the Law*: freed from the innumerable demands imposed by the Mosaic Law and from its sentence of spiritual death upon its transgressors (see 7, 6 n). *Bring forth fruit unto God*: perform holy deeds that lead to eternal life.

7, 5: *When we were in the flesh*: under the domination of evil inclinations, which brought forth sin.

7, 6: "The outworn letter" refers to the external, legal prescription of the Mosaic Law which informs man what he must do but give him no aid to do it. The service "in a new spirit" refers to an attitude of willingly obeying any law that is binding to a Christian because of a motivation by the Holy Spirit from within, and no longer because of the letter of the law from without. The freedom from the Mosaic Law means not only the freedom from the ceremonial, cultic and civil laws but freedom from the exterior constraining character of the moral parts of the Mosaic Law (e.g., the ten commandments), so that the Christian obeys them no longer out of fear but out of love.

7, 7-25: This is a celebrated but complicated passage. The vast majority of scholars agrees that presented here is a drama with three actors: Law, Sin, and Death. They act in the theater of the "I." The "I" is not Paul (all agree), nor Paul as the representative of mankind, nor Adam in paradise, nor the history of Paul or of a Semite but the "I" is a man as a responsible person. Furthermore, this man is described as living in the era prior to the Mosaic Law (vv. 7-9) then during the era of the Mosaic Law when the Law's holy teachings are an occasion for sin (vv. 10-24), and finally this man is described as being united with Christ (v. 25).

7, 7: *Is the Law sin?*: since the Mosaic Law is so closely associated with sin (vv. 1-6), is the (Mosaic) Law part and parcel of

through the Law. For I had not known lust unless the
 8 Law had said, "Thou shalt not lust." But sin, having
 thus found an occasion, worked in me by means of the
 commandment all manner of lust, for without the Law sin
 9 was dead. Once upon a time I was living without law, but
 10 when the commandment came, sin revived, | and I died, and
 the commandment that was unto life was discovered in my
 11 case to be unto death. For sin, having taken occasion from
 the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.
 12 So that the Law indeed is holy and the commandment holy
 and just and good.

13 *Sin the Cause of Death* Did then that which is good
 become death to me? By no means! But sin, that it might be
 manifest as sin, worked death for me through that which
 is good, in order that sin by reason of the commandment
 14 might become immeasurably sinful. For we know that the

the sinful force that entered the world through Adam? "By no means!"
 Yet . . . *through the Law*: before the promulgation of the Mosaic
 Law it was not clear what constituted a sin and what did not.

The majority opinion holds that the Greek word "*nomos*" translated in vv. 7-13 as "Law" refers to the Mosaic Law and that the Greek word "*entole*" translated as "commandment" (in vv. 8, 9, 11, 12, 13) means the Mosaic Law not in its ritual and ceremonial aspects but in its aspect of permanent moral content. The example given in v. 7 "Thou shalt not lust" (Ex 20, 17) confirms this majority opinion.

7, 8-9: Before the era of the Mosaic Law the power of sin did not operate in full force since it was not very clear just what was sin ("for without the Law sin was dead"). Once the Mosaic-Law was promulgated, without giving aid to observe it, it became the occasion for many sins.

7, 8: *The commandment*: see 7, 7 n.

7, 9: Before the era of the Mosaic Law, man was living not a full spiritual life of grace but a relative spiritual life in the sense that he was not in open rebellion against God, for it was unclear just what acts were sinful. Yet, when the Mosaic Law was promulgated, the power of sin awakened to full force in the sense that man, enlightened on the nature of sin, sinned clearly against God and fell under the domination of spiritual death.

7, 10-12: Although the Mosaic Law was intended to bring spiritual life to man by making clear what was sinful, it brought instead spiritual death.

7, 13: "Did then that which is good (the Mosaic Law, v. 12) become death (perpetual spiritual death) to me?" Paul asks, and he answers: "By no means!" Yet, that sin might show itself as it is, it caused spiritual death through the Mosaic Law ("that which is good") and sin appeared excessively sinful.

7, 14-25: The description of man as living under the Mosaic Law began in v. 10 but, beginning with v. 14, Paul says it more directly.

7, 14: *Spiritual*: the Mosaic Law was of divine origin. It was

Law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold into the power of sin.
 15 For I do not understand what I do, for it is not what I
 16 wish that I do, but what I hate, that I do. But if I do what
 17 I do not wish, I admit that the Law is good. Now therefore
 it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me.
 18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwells,
 because to wish is within my power, but I do not find the
 19 strength to accomplish what is good. For I do not the
 good that I wish, but the evil that I do not wish, that I per-
 20 form. Now if I do what I do not wish, it is no longer I who
 21 do it, but the sin that dwells in me. Therefore, when I wish
 to do good I discover this law, namely, that evil is at hand
 22 for me. For I am delighted with the law of God according
 23 to the inner man, | but I see another law in my members,
 warring against the law of my mind and making me pris-
 oner to the law of sin that is in my members.

24 *Deliverance Due to the Grace of God* Unhappy man that
 I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?
 25 The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore I
 myself with my mind serve the law of God, but with my
 flesh the law of sin.

8

¹ The Faithful Need Fear No Condemnation There is

intended to lead man to God gradually by clarifying what displeased
 and what pleased God. *Carnal*: opposed to the Holy Spirit. *Sold into
 the power of sin*: fallen under the influence of sin.

7, 16: *But if I do what I do not wish*: by the very fact that
 I do not wish to disobey the Mosaic Law, I thereby admit that the
 Law is good.

7, 17: It is no longer "I" the responsible man (see 7, 7-25 n) who
 judges that the Law is good and wants to obey it, but it is sin, a
 personified foreign and evil power that rules me.

7, 21: *This law*: not the Mosaic Law but a general norm. *That
 evil is at hand*: that evil is waiting for man.

7, 22: *The inner man*: man's reason, which finds satisfaction in the
 manifestation of God's will through the moral law.

7, 23: See v. 14.

7, 24: *The body of this death*: the question is not who will
 dispatch man from his mortal life but who will deliver him from
 spiritual death and sin. *Who will deliver me?*: Paul's answer is:
 Christ.

7, 25: *The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord*: in Greek,
 "Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ." *Therefore I . . .
 law of sin*: a summary of vv. 13-25.

8, 1-11: In these verses, "Spirit" or "spirit" sometimes means the

therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ
 2 Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh. For the law
 of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has delivered me
 3 from the law of sin and of death. For what was impos-
 sible to the Law, in that it was weak because of the flesh,
 God has made good. By sending his Son in the likeness of
 sinful flesh as a sin-offering, he has condemned sin in the
 4 flesh, | in order that the requirements of the Law might be
 fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but
 according to the spirit.

5 ***The Flesh and the Spirit*** Now they who are according
 to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but they who
 6 are according to the spirit mind the things of the spirit. For
 the inclination of the flesh is death, but the inclination of the
 7 spirit, life and peace. For the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to
 God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be.
 8 And they who are carnal cannot please God.
 9 You, however, are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the
 Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have

Holy Spirit, sometimes grace, and, at times, man's spirit renewed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Commentators often differ in their application of these meanings to the word "spirit" as used here. To know that in the Greek text the word "spirit" is sometimes accompanied with the definite article does not help much to arrive at the exact meaning of "spirit."

8, 1: *Who do not walk according to the flesh*: omit. Not in the Greek.

8, 2: *Me*: textual critics dispute whether it should read "you." Those who live in union with Jesus are guided in their conduct by the spirit of life, which frees the Christian from domination by sin and from spiritual death.

8, 3: This may be paraphrased: For what the Mosaic Law could not do (since it lacked force because the flesh opposed the Law), God has done by "sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" to restrain the dominating power of sin (which ruled man's evil appetites and inclinations) by the greater force of abundant graces released through the crucifixion of Jesus on Calvary.

8, 4: *The requirements of the Law*: the Law required to do God's will, which is realized only when Christians live according to the spirit (or according to the "spirit of life" see 8, 2 n) and not when they live according to sinful tendencies ("flesh").

8, 5-13: Paul contrasts the consequences that befall those who live according to the spirit with the consequences that befall those who live according to the flesh. See an expansion on this theme in Gal 5, 16-25.

8, 7: The sense is: those who live according to the sinful appetites (or who are "carnal" v. 8) are opposed to God.

8, 9: *Spiritual*: literally, "in the spirit," which probably means

- 10 the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, the body, it is true, is dead by reason of sin
- 11 but the spirit is life by reason of justification. But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you.
- 12 **A Solemn Warning** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh
- 13 | for if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live.
- 14 **The Faithful Sons of God** For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself
- 15 gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also: heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him.
- 16 **Yearning of All Creation** For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the

grace. *The Spirit of God . . . the Spirit of Christ*: both times, "Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit.

8, 10: *The body, it is true, is dead*: destined for physical death because "sin" was introduced by Adam (5, 12) "but the spirit" (of man renewed by grace, see 8, 1-11 n) gives spiritual life "by reason of justification." One opinion of this last phrase is: on account of justice conferred by God on man.

8, 11: "The Spirit" (the Holy Spirit) of him (of God the Father). *He who*: God the Father will bring our bodies to life at the end of the world.

8, 13: *You will die*: an eternal death. *You will live*: an eternal life.

8, 14: When Christians are guided by the Holy Spirit they become adopted sons of God. Here, and elsewhere, Paul means a real spiritual organic adoption, not a mere juridical one.

8, 15: The fear of those who live under the Mosaic Law is replaced by the confidence of the Christian in the filial relationship with God. *Adoption*: not in a juridical sense but in a *real supernatural* sense. *Abba*: see Mk 14, 36 n. The confident use of "Father" reveals the working of the Holy Spirit within the Christian.

8, 16: *To our spirit*: in Greek, "with our spirit." The Holy Spirit makes the Christians aware of being God's adopted sons.

19 glory to come that will be revealed in us. For the eager longing of creation awaits the revelation of the sons of
 20 God. For creation was made subject to vanity—not by its own will but by reason of him who made it subject—
 21 in hope, | because creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of
 22 the sons of God. For we know that all creation groans and travails in pain until now.

23 *Yearning of Human Beings* And not only it, but we ourselves also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit—we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption
 24 as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved. But hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a
 25 man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

26 *The Holy Spirit Aids Us* But in like manner the Spirit also helps our weakness. For we do not know what we

8, 19: Beginning with "cursed be the ground because of you . . . thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you" in Gn 3, 17f, many Old Testament writers made nature re-echo the sentiments of man. They made nature commiserate and at times rejoice with man from the time of his fall onward. In the same poetic vein, Paul metaphorically describes nature as rejoicing with man at the end of time, and he personifies nature as sympathizing with man who awaits the last day of joy and glory.

8, 20-21: Man often used nature vainly, sinfully. Creation was made subject to vanity ("not by its own will, but by reason of him [God] who made it subject") by associating the destiny of nature with the destiny of man, according to the current biblical idea (see 8, 19 n). Continuing in this biblical strand, Paul describes nature as being "in hope" just as man is living in the hope given to him by God after Adam's fall. It is because of living in this hope that nature itself will be freed from the bondage of sinful abuse by man. Then nature will share man's freedom, glory, and joy as it did in paradise before the fall.

In this section and throughout the epistle, Paul focuses on the transformation of man and not of nature. The apostle does not teach here that nature will be changed at the end of the world.

8, 22-23: All created things are in pain because of nature's bondage (v. 22) and all men join in sympathy with this woeful chorus (v. 23).

8, 23: *The first-fruits of the Spirit*: the Holy Spirit, the pre-eminent Easter gift. *Redemption of our body*: bodily resurrection at the end of the world.

8, 24-25: The Christian's complete salvation including bodily resurrection is not yet accomplished (v. 23) but he patiently hopes for it.

8, 26: The Holy Spirit helps the Christian to desire what he ought to, i.e., the full possession of God.

should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself pleads
 27 for us with unutterable groanings. And he who searches the
 hearts knows what the Spirit desires, that he pleads for
 the saints according to God.

28 *God's Designs* Now we know that for those who love
 God all things work together unto good, for those who
 29 according to his purpose, are saints through his call. For
 those whom he has foreknown he has also predestined to be
 come conformed to the image of his Son, that he should
 30 be the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom
 he has predestined, them he has also called; and those
 whom he has called, them he has also justified, and those
 whom he has justified, them he has also glorified.

31 *Unshakable Hope in God* What then shall we say to
 32 these things? If God is for us, who is against us? | He who
 has not spared even his own Son but has delivered him for

8, 27: *He who searches the hearts*: God. *According to God*: in conformity with God's will.

8, 28-39: Paul states in this passage what God's will or role is in the work of salvation.

8, 28-30: According to one interpretation, this difficult text treats of individual predestination. This interpretation distinguishes these two groups: those who are predestined to be saved and those who are not. Another interpretation understands this passage as treating not of individuals but of the one social Christian group that is already justified and whose collaboration with God is tacitly supposed. According to this opinion (Lyonnet), Paul envisages only one aspect of salvation, namely, the role of God in his chain of acts that lead to eternal life. Paul encourages the Christian community of Rome to persevere spiritually to the end.

8, 28: *Are saints through his call*: through God's initiative at the beginning of the Christians' conversion.

8, 29-30: These two verses speak of the chain of divine acts that lead the Christian community to the glorious life after the manner of the resurrected Christ.

8, 29: *Conformed to the image of his Son*: through filial adoption. *The firstborn*: from the resurrection.

8, 30: Paul passes from the order of eternal intentions (v. 29) to the order of realization in time. *Them he has also glorified*: by making them eligible to attain a corporeal glorified body, or according to another opinion, he has also glorified them through sanctifying grace.

8, 31-39: Paul's diction in this passage (and in 1 Cor 13) rises to the heights of Plato's in *Phaedrus* (E. Norden, a critic of ancient literary style).

8, 31: *Who is against us?*: who can harm us spiritually?

8, 32: God's gift of his Son is a guarantee that God will give Christians all the means of salvation.

us all, how can he fail to grant us also all things with him?
 33 | Who shall make accusation against the elect of God? It is
 34 God who justifies! | Who shall condemn? It is Christ
 Jesus who died; yes and rose again, he who is at the right
 hand of God, who also intercedes for us!

35 *Indomitable Love of Christ* Who shall separate us from
 the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution,
 36 or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? Even as
 it is written, "For thy sake we are put to death all the day
 long. We are regarded as sheep for the slaughter."
 37 But in all these things we overcome because of him who
 38 has loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life,
 nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things
 39 to come, nor powers, | nor height, nor depth, nor any other
 creature will be able to separate us from the love of God,
 which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

V. THE PROBLEM OF THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL

1

1 *Paul Grieves for the Jews* I speak the truth in Christ, I
 do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy
 2 Spirit, | that I have great sadness and continuous sorrow
 3 in my heart. For I could wish to be anathema myself from

8, 33-34: The general meaning is that Christians should not fear
 the loss of salvation because they have God who justifies and they
 have the resurrected Christ who intercedes for them. (There are
 various opinions on the explanation of the finer points of these verses.)

8, 35-39: No obstacle will separate Christians from the love that
 Christ has for them. (According to the modern view, this passage
 speaks of Christ's love for Christians and not vice versa.)

8, 36: The Christian's love of Christ should be modeled according
 to that love expressed in Ps 43, 22.

8, 37: *These things*: see v. 35.

8, 38-39: Paul lists the most mysterious and formidable powers of
 the created world.

8, 39: *Love of God . . . our Lord*: the granite foundation of the
 Christian's confidence is the love of God manifested through Christ
 the mediator.

9-11: Since there is frequent mention in chs. 1-8 of the Jews'
 failure to accept Christ, chs. 9-11 answer the logical question: are
 the Jews rejected? Paul answers that they are not definitively rejected
 but only partially and temporarily, till the Gentiles are converted.

9, 3: Paul literally says that he would accept eternal separation from
 Christ if this separation would help to save his fellow Israelites. Paul
 vividly uses the language of love, not of theology. He means that he
 would undergo any possible suffering to win the Jews for Christ.

Christ for the sake of my brethren, who are my kinsmen
 4 according to the flesh; | who are Israelites, who have the
 adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the
 5 legislation and the worship and the promises; | who have
 the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the
 flesh, who is, over all things, God blessed forever, amen

6 ***God's Election Depends on His Free Choice*** It is not
 that the word of God has failed. For they are not all Isra-
 7 elites who are sprung from Israel; | nor because they are the
 descendants of Abraham, are they all his children; but
 "Through Isaac shall thy posterity bear thy name."
 8 That is to say, they are not sons of God who are the chil-
 dren of the flesh, but it is the children of promise who are
 9 reckoned as posterity. For this is a word of promise: "About
 10 this time I will come and Sara shall have a son." And not
 she only; but also Rebecca, who conceived by one man, Isaac

9, 4: *Adoption as sons*: see Ex 4, 23: "Israel is my son, my first-born." *The glory*: see Ex 40, 34: "the glory of the Lord filled the Dwelling." *The covenants*: the covenant with Abraham was renewed with Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. *The legislation*: see Ex 20, 1ff. *The worship*: the true worship. *The promises*: a reference to salvation through the Messiah.

9, 5: *The fathers*: the patriarchs, bearers of the alliance.

9, 6-12: Paul says: the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and God's plans were not foiled because the physical descendants of Abraham did not in general accept Christ. On the contrary, the prophecies were fulfilled insofar as those Jews and Gentiles who accepted Christ may be considered *spiritual* descendants of Abraham.

God's plan from the beginning was not to elect just the Jews for salvation, and only if they failed to elect the Gentiles. No, God always intended through his free choice, not through race or merit, the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles. Historically, however, God channeled his promises and teachings through the Jewish race.

Paul illustrates God's free choice with two examples. The first example (vv. 7-8) comes from God's promise of a son to Abraham and Sara (Gn 21, 12; 18, 10). Even though Isaac and Ismael were the sons of Abraham, it did not follow that both were chosen to be heirs of the promises that God had made to Abraham. Isaac alone was chosen. He became the symbol of the children of promise. The second example (vv. 10-12) is: from Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca (Gn 25, 23f), God freely chose Jacob, "before the children had yet been born . . ." (v. 11). (According to many modern scholars, Jacob and Esau in the story of Genesis are symbols of two races. See Gn 25, 23 n.) These two examples show that God freely chose the Jewish race that descended from Jacob, but not for any superiority over the Edomite race that descended from Esau. This free choice is illustrated in v. 13 by a quotation from Mal 1, 2: "... Esau I have hated" (a Hebrew idiom for "loved less").

11 our father; | for before the children had yet been born, or
 12 had done aught of good or evil, in order that the selective
 12 purpose of God might stand, | depending not on deeds, but
 on him who calls, it was said to her, "The elder shall serve
 13 the younger"; | as it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau
 I have hated."

14 **God Is Not Unjust** What then shall we say? Is there in-
 15 justice with God? By no means! | For he says to Moses, "I
 will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show pity
 16 to whom I will show pity." So then there is question not of
 him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God showing
 17 mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very pur-
 pose I have raised thee up that I may show in thee my
 power, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."
 18 Therefore he has mercy on whom he will, and whom he will
 he hardens.

19 **His Power and Glory** Thou sayest to me: Why then does
 20 he still find fault? For who resists his will? O man, who art
 thou to reply to God? Does the object moulded say to him
 21 who moulded it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or is not
 the potter master of his clay, to make from the same mass one
 22 vessel for honorable, another for ignoble use? But what if
 God, wishing to show his wrath and to make known his
 power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, ready
 23 for destruction, | that he might show the riches of his glory
 upon vessels of mercy, which he has prepared unto glory— |

9, 14-15: Has God been unjust in freely choosing, in the past and in the present, some Jews and many Gentiles? Just as God freely chose Moses and used Pharaoh according to his plan (Ex 33, 19), so now God freely chooses few Jews and many Gentiles.

9, 16: God's call does not depend on the will of man nor on his effort.

9, 17: Pharaoh's resistance made God's power shine all the more brilliantly in the liberation of his people from Egyptian domination (see Ex 9, 16).

9, 18: *Whom he will he hardens*: God did not cause Pharaoh to become a hardened sinner. It is characteristic of inspired writers to attribute everything to God without distinguishing what God causes from what he allows.

9, 19: If a person in resisting God's will thereby realizes God's will in some way, then why does God "find fault"?

9, 20-21: *Why hast thou made me thus?*: the question is as absurd as that of a vase questioning its potter.

9, 22-23: Paul returns to the idea explained in 9, 17 n.

24 even us whom he has called not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles?

25 *Witness of the Old Testament* As he says in Osee, "A people not mine I will call my people, and an unbeloved, beloved, and her who had not obtained mercy, one who has
26 obtained mercy. And it shall be in the place where it was said to them: you are not my people; there they shall be called sons of the living God."

27 And Isaias cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the children of Israel are as the sands of the sea, the
28 remnant shall be saved. For the Lord fulfills his word speedily in justice, because a speedy word will the Lord accomplish on earth."

29 And as Isaias foretold, "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a posterity, we should have become as Sodom and should have been like Gomorrah."

30 *Jews' Refusal to Believe* What then shall we say? That the Gentiles who were not pursuing justice have secured
31 justice, but a justice that is from faith; | but Israel, by pursuing a law of justice, has not attained to the law of justice.
32 And why? Because they sought it not from faith, but as it were from works. For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone,
33 as it is written, "Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of scandal: and whoever believes in him shall not be disappointed."

10

1 *Ignorance of the Justice of God* Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God is in their behalf unto their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have zeal for God,

9, 24: Just as God chose the Jews in the past, so now he chooses some Jews and many Gentiles.

9, 25-29: The incredulity of the Jews did not foil God's plan because he formed a new people, composed of the remnant of the Jews and of many Gentiles. Paul finds this foretold for the Gentiles in Osee 2, 24f and 1, 10 and for the Jews in Is 10, 22f and 1, 9.

9, 30: What then shall we conclude about the many Gentile and few Jewish converts? *Justice*: moral and religious righteousness in relations with God.

9, 33: The stumbling stone (Is 28, 16) was Yahweh who occasioned the ruin for the rebellious Jews. Paul transposes Yahweh into Christ over whom the unbelieving Jews stumble.

10, 2: *Not according to knowledge*: not according to proper enlightenment.

³ but not according to knowledge; for, ignorant of the justice of God and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to the justice of God. For Christ is the consummation of the Law unto justice for everyone who believes.

⁵ *This Justice Comes through Faith* For Moses wrote that the man who does that justice which is of the Law shall live by it. But the justice that is of faith says, "Do not say in thy heart: Who shall ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring down Christ); | "or, Who shall descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart" (that is, the word of faith, which we preach).
⁹ For if thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart a man believes unto justice, and with the mouth profession of faith is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him shall not be disappointed." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord of all, rich towards all who call upon him. "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

¹⁴ *Refusal to Believe the Gospel* How then are they to call upon him in whom they have not believed? But how are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how

10, 3: *Justice of God*: pardon for sins and a life of intimacy with God. The Jews tried to establish their own justice by observing the Mosaic Law. They did not feel the need of a Savior. To confess their sins and admit their moral weaknesses seemed like stooping to the level of pagan sinners.

10, 4: The sense here is that Christ is both the term for and the purpose of the Mosaic Law because it is completed in him toward whom it was oriented.

10, 5: The Jews believed that observance of the Mosaic Law guaranteed a life of friendship with God.

10, 6-8: Paul quotes Dt 30, 12-14 which says that it is not difficult to observe God's law. One need not seek the law in the skies nor in the abyss, for it is near at hand. The apostle substitutes the law in this Deuteronomic passage with justice through faith in Jesus. This justice is not something that must be brought down from heaven or brought up from the abyss because Christ has already descended from heaven and he has risen from the dead. In other words, the actions needed to attain justice through faith have already been carried out by Jesus through his incarnation, death, and resurrection. Hence, it is easy to acquire justice through faith.

10, 11: See Is 28, 16.

10, 13: See Jl 2, 32.

- 15 are they to hear, if no one preaches? And how are men to preach unless they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace; of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"
- 16 But all did not obey the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"
- 17 Faith then depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ. | But I say: Have they not heard? Yes, indeed, "Their voice has gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
- 18 But I say: Has not Israel known? First of all, Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy of those who are not a nation; I will stir you to anger against a senseless nation."
- 19 Then Isaiah dares to say, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I appeared openly to those who made no inquiry of me."
- 20 But to Israel he says, "All the day long I stretched out my hand to a people unbelieving and contradicting."

11

- 1 *A Remnant of the Jews Will Be Saved* I say then: Has God cast off his people? By no means! For I also am an Israelite of the posterity of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast off his people whom he foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the account of Elias, how he lodges complaint with God against Israel? "Lord, they have slain thy prophets, they have razed thy altars; and I only am left, and they are seeking my life."
- 2 But what does the divine answer say to him? "I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed their knees to Baal."
- 3 Even so, then, at the present time there is a remnant

10, 15: See Is 52, 7 n. *Who preach the gospel of peace*: not in the Greek text.

10, 16: See Is 53, 1.

10, 18: See Ps 18, 5.

10, 19: See Dt 32, 21.

10, 20-21: See Is 65, 1-2.

11, 1-5: Although many more Gentiles than Jews accepted Christ, God has not completely rejected his people. For instance, Paul himself is "an Israelite." Besides, the few Jewish converts made the situation in those days resemble the circumstances at the time of Elias when there remained only a remnant of faithful followers (3 Kgs 19, 10; 19, 18).

6 left, selected out of grace. And if out of grace, then not in virtue of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.

7 **Witness of the Scriptures** What then? What Israel was seeking after, that it has not obtained; but the chosen have
8 obtained it, and the rest have been blinded, | as it is written, "God has given them a spirit of stupor until this present day, eyes that they may not see, and ears that they may not hear."

9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap
10 and a stumbling-block and a recompense unto them; | let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and let them bow their backs always."

11 **Israel's Fall the Gentiles' Salvation** I say then: have they so stumbled as to fall? By no means! But by their offense salvation has come to the Gentiles, that they may be jealous
12 of them. Now if their offense is the riches of the world, and their decline the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their full number!

13 **The Gentiles Must Be Humble** For I say to you Gentiles: As long, indeed, as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I will

11, 6: *Otherwise grace is no longer grace*: what one merits from work cannot simultaneously be a free gift.

11, 7-10: Only a few chosen Jews out of all Israel have obtained God's justice through faith in Christ.

11, 8: *Not see . . . not hear*: Paul adapts a quote (partly from Is 29, 10 and partly from Dt 29, 4) to signify that the miracles and preaching of Christ and the apostles did not impress the mass of Jews.

11, 9-10: Adapting Ps 68, 22-23, Paul makes the "table" a symbol of the religious benefits of scripture and of cultic rites which, more joyfully possessed, now become "a trap and a snare" for the Jews since they did not lead them to Christ as they should have. Similar to people who have fallen headlong into a trap, their eyes are "darkened" and they are groping about to find their way.

11, 11-12: "So stumbled as to fall" with no hope of recovery? The Jewish refusal to accept Christ ("offense") was most probably conducive to large-scale conversions from among the pagans. The pagan saw clearly that the Christian was different from the Jew, for they opposed each other so bitterly. Had the vast majority of the first converts come from among the Jews, the Gentiles would have received the impression that Christ's religion was just another form of Judaism. But it turned out that the Gentile converts were more numerous. The unconverted Jews may, therefore, become "jealous" of former pagans who claimed all the riches of Judaism (Yahweh, scripture, the patriarchs). If the Jews prove truly "jealous" and come to be converted, they will enrich the Gentiles even more because of their renowned "zeal for God" (10, 2).

14 honor my ministry, | in the hope that I may provoke to
 jealousy those who are my flesh, and may save some of
 15 them. For if the rejection of them is the reconciliation of
 the world, what will the reception of them be but life
 16 from the dead? Now if the first handful of the dough is
 holy, so also is the lump of dough; and if the root is holy,
 17 so also are the branches. But if some of the branches have
 been broken off, and if thou, being a wild olive, art grafted
 in their place, and hast become a partaker of the stem and
 18 fatness of the olive tree, | do not boast against the branches.

But if thou dost boast, still it is not thou that supportest
 19 the stem, but the stem thee. Thou wilt say, then, "Branches
 20 were broken off that I might be grafted in." True, but
 they were broken off because of unbelief, whereas thou by
 21 faith standest. Be not high-minded, but fear. | For if God
 has not spared the natural branches, perhaps he may not
 22 spare thee either. See, then, the goodness and the severity
 of God: his severity towards those who have fallen, but
 the goodness of God towards thee if thou^a abidest in his
 goodness; otherwise thou also wilt be cut off.

23 *Israel Can Yet Be Saved* And they also, if they do not
 continue in unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to

11, 15: *Life from the dead*: many interpreters understand that the conversion of the mass of Jews will be the signal for the resurrection from the dead and the end of the world. The majority of these interpreters believe that the time interval between the conversion and the end of the world will be close. They point to the parallelism in v. 15 as an argument. If the rejection of the Jews occasioned the immediate conversion of many Gentiles (see 11, 11-12 n) then Paul must mean that there will also be a brief time interval between the conversion and the end of the world. However, many other scholars hold that the time interval between the conversion of the Jews and the end of the world is most vague.

11, 16: *The first handful of the dough is holy, so also is the lump of dough*: some suggested meanings of this comparison are: the first Jewish converts; Jesus; the patriarchs, especially Abraham. The main argument for the third interpretation is that the patriarchs explain best the metaphor of "root" in the second comparison ("if the root is holy, so also are the branches"). The "lump of dough" and "the branches" are metaphors for the Jewish people.

11, 17: If "some" of the Jews have not been converted, and Gentiles have replaced them, let not the Gentiles boast. Paul, treading softly, says "some" for the mass of Jews.

11, 18: The tree on which the Gentiles are grafted has its roots in Israel's history not in Gentile history.

11, 23: *They*: the incredulous Jews.

²⁴ graft them back. For if thou hast been cut off from the wild olive tree which is natural to thee, and contrary to nature, hast been grafted into the cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

²⁵ *Israel's Final Conversion* For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that a partial blindness only has befallen Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles should enter, ²⁶ and thus all Israel should be saved, as it is written, "There will come out of Sion the deliverer and he will turn away ²⁷ impiety from Jacob; | and this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."

²⁸ In view of the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but in view of the divine choice, they are most dear for the ²⁹ sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the call of God are without repentance.

³⁰ *Ultimate Triumph of God's Mercy* For as you also at one time did not believe God, but now have obtained mercy

11, 24: If God has engrafted in the cultivated olive tree the branches of a wild olive tree (the Gentiles), he will more easily engraft in the cultivated olive tree its own natural branches (the unconverted Jews). In this section on the engrafting of branches, Paul is not concerned about speaking accurately of botanical facts.

11, 25-26: See the same teaching in Ap 11, 13 n. *Mystery*: the future conversion of the Jews. *Wise in your own conceits*: lest you proudly think that God has abandoned Israel and is exclusively concerned with the Gentiles. *A partial blindness only has befallen Israel*: at Paul's time the "partial blindness" affected the majority (see 11, 17 n). *Until the full number . . . Israel should be saved*: after the conversion of the generality of Gentiles (not every individual Gentile) the generality of the Jews will be converted (not every individual Jew). Nothing is stated as to the duration of the time interval between these two general conversions (compare 11, 15 n).

11, 26-27: Through the combined quotation of Is 59, 20f and 27, 9, Paul says that the conversion of the Jews will be the effect of the Messiah's coming through his Church.

11, 28: The manner in which the Jews rejected the Gospel made them enemies of God "for your sake," i.e., their rejection of the Gospel has temporarily fostered the conversion of Gentiles (see 11, 11-12 n). Yet, by "divine choice" the Jews remain God's chosen people because of the "fathers," i.e., the patriarchs. (This verse confirms the interpretation as explained in 11, 16 n.)

11, 29: God's gifts and his invitation are irrevocable. God invited the Jews into his kingdom and into it they must some day enter.

11, 30-31: *Did not believe God*: in Greek "were disobedient to

31 by reason of their unbelief, | so they too have not now
believed by reason of the mercy shown you, that they too
32 may obtain mercy. For God has shut up all in unbelief, that
he may have mercy upon all.

33 *God's Ways Unsearchable* Oh, the depth of the riches of
the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incompre-
34 hensible are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!
For "Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been
35 his counsellor? Or who has first given to him, that recompense
should be made him?"
36 For from him and through him and unto him are all
things. To him be the glory forever, amen.

II. MORAL

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS

12

1 *Conclusion of the Foregoing* I exhort you therefore,
brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as
a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God—your spiritual
2 service. And be not conformed to this world, but be trans-
formed in the newness of your mind, that you may discern
what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

God." *Unbelief*: in Greek, "disobedience." The Greek of v. 31 reads: "So also now they (the Jews) have not obeyed by reason of your (obtaining) mercy in order that they (the Jews) may later obtain mercy."

V. 30 says that Jewish disobedience, i.e., their refusal to accept Christ was conducive to making converts from the Gentiles (see 11, 11-12 n). Inversely, God's mercy toward the Gentiles has occasioned further disobedience among the Jews (v. 31).

11, 32: Jews and Gentiles have disbelieved.

11, 33-36: In the plan of divine Providence, man's disbelief ended with God's mercy. It is this consoling truth that causes Paul to pour out praises to God.

12, 1ff: The moral part of this epistle is not as well developed and connected as the preceding dogmatic section (chs. 1-11).

12, 1: *As a sacrifice . . . service*: an alternate translation: "as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual service."

12, 1-2: A Christian's life should be a sacrifice offered to God. A Christian's mind should be transformed to know what is pleasing and acceptable to God.

3 Humility and Concord By the grace that has been given to me, I say to each one among you: let no one rate himself more than he ought, but let him rate himself according to moderation, and according as God has apportioned to each one the measure of faith. For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, | so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another. But we have gifts differing according to the grace that has been given us, such as prophecy to be used according to the proportion of faith; | or ministry, in ministering; or he who teaches, in teaching; | he who exhorts, in exhorting; he who gives, in simplicity; he who presides, with carefulness; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Fraternal Charity Let love be without pretense. Hate what is evil, hold to what is good. Love one another with fraternal charity, anticipating one another with honor. Be not slothful in zeal; be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, | rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation, persevering in prayer. Share the needs of the saints, practising hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Be of one mind towards one another. Do not set your mind on high things but condescend to the lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits. To no man render evil for evil, but provide good things not only in the sight of God,

12, 3: *By the grace*: of the apostolate. *Measure of faith*: probably charismatic gifts and graces.

12, 4-5: See 1 Cor 12, 12-30 for an elaboration of this comparison.

12, 6-8: Each Christian should use his spiritual gift as well as possible, yet never forget that these gifts have been granted to him by God.

12, 6: *Prophecy*: see 1 Cor 12, 10 n. *According to . . . faith*: the general meaning is clear: the gift of prophecy should not be abused. One interpretation of the specific meaning of this phrase is: let the prophet make use of accepted Christian teachings lest his preaching become adulterated by exaggerations or misrepresentations.

12, 7: *Ministry*: not only the office of deacon but all types of services. *Teachers* see 1 Cor 12, 8.

12, 8: *Exhorts*: the preacher's work is not absolutely distinct from that of the teacher (v. 7) nor is the work of the one who gives charitably absolutely distinct from the one who performs acts of mercy. *Presides*: probably someone with administrative duties.

12, 14: Compare Lk 6, 28, "Bless those who curse you. . . ."

12, 17: *Not only in the sight of God but also*: not in the Greek.

- 18 but also in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as far
 19 as in you lies, be at peace with all men. Do not avenge
 yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath, for it is
 written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."
 20 But "If thy enemy is hungry, give him food; if he is
 thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing thou wilt heap
 coals of fire upon his head."
 21 Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

13

- 1 **Obedience** Let everyone be subject to the higher au-
 thorities, for there exists no authority except from God,
 2 and those who exist have been appointed by God. Therefore
 he who resists the authority resists the ordinance of God;
 and they that resist bring on themselves condemnation.
 3 For rulers are a terror not to the good work but to the evil.
 Dost thou wish, then, not to fear the authority? Do what is
 4 good and thou wilt have praise from it. For it is God's
 minister to thee for good. But if thou dost what is evil,
 fear, for not without reason does it carry the sword. For
 it is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him
 5 who does evil. Wherefore you must needs be subject, not
 only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake.
 6 For this is also why you pay tribute, for they are the min-

But provide good things in the sight of all men: the Greek probably means "consider all men honorably."

12, 19: An individual should not take revenge on someone under the pretext that he is executing God's sentence. The quotation is freely given from Dt 32, 35.

12, 20: The Christian's type of vengeance should be kindness. *Coals . . . upon his head:* see annotation in Prv 25, 22a. This obscure expression means that the Christian's kindness will cause the enemy to be embarrassed.

13, 1ff: This calm sympathetic treatment of the Christian's duties toward civil authorities was written before the great Roman persecutions began. Ultimately, all civil authority is subject to God, says Paul; but, within the framework of the prevalent idea that the Roman emperor received his power from the people whom he represented, Paul correctly supposed that the ruling authorities, even though they were pagans, had nonetheless the common good in mind. The apostle, however, does not consider the related complicated problem of what people should do when a tyrant abuses his power.

13, 1: See 1 Pt 2, 13-14.

13, 4: *Sword:* the Roman symbol of supreme authority. The *ius gladii* meant the power over life and death.

13, 5: Paul encourages obedience because it is according to God's will ("for conscience' sake") since the civil power is legitimate.

7 isters of God, serving unto this very end. Render to all men whatever is their due; tribute to whom tribute is due; taxes to whom taxes are due; fear to whom fear is due; honor to whom honor is due.

8 **Charity a Social Duty** Owe no man anything except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the Law. For "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not covet"; and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

10 Love does no evil to a neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law.

11 **The Spirit of Christ** And this do, understanding the time, for it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we came to believe.

12 The night is far advanced; the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armor

13 of light. Let us walk becomingly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not

14 in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and as for the flesh, take no thought for its lusts.

13, 7: Compare Mt 22, 21.

13, 8: Next to the fulfillment of civil obligations the Christian still had to fulfill obligations of charity. *Neighbor*: notice how the New Testament insists on the love of neighbor in the concrete, not on humanity in the abstract.

13, 9: See Ex 20, 13-17.

13, 10a: A Christian is at least always obliged to live so as not to harm his neighbor.

13, 10b: The complete fulfillment of the Law is the love of neighbor which, for Paul, is presumably joined with the love of God as expressed in Mk 12, 29-31.

13, 11: This verse is often interpreted as a reference to Christ's second coming. Others believe that Paul refers to the Messianic era as coextensive with the life of the Church on earth. According to the second opinion, the apostle exhorts the Christians to live spiritually.

13, 12: *The night*: not the era before Christ but probably the period of sin. The "day" of eternal salvation is near. *The works of darkness*: sins. *Armor of light*: good works (see Eph 6, 13ff).

13, 13: See 1, 28-31 n on the list of vices.

13, 13-14: These two verses played a decisive role in St. Augustine's conversion (*Confessions* VIII, 12).

13, 14: *Put on . . . Christ*: make your actions reflect Christ's presence within you (see Gal 3, 27 n). *Flesh*: Paul does not urge neglect of the body but a disregard for the flesh insofar as it is the source of evil tendencies.

14

1 Mutual Forbearance But him who is weak in faith, receive, without disputes about opinions. For one believes that he may eat all things; but he who is weak, let him eat vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who art thou to judge another's servant? To his own lord he stands or falls; but he will stand, for God is able to make him stand. For one esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let everyone be convinced in his own mind. | He who regards the day, regards it for the Lord; and he who eats, eats for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God. And he who does not eat, abstains for the Lord, and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself; | for if we live, we live to the Lord, or if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? Or thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand at the judgment-seat of God; | for it is

14, 1—15, 13: The apostle speaks of two groups, the "weak in faith" and the strong. The "weak" did not doubt the truths of the Gospel. They merely lacked mature understanding. They refused to eat meat (14, 2), drink wine (14, 21), and they observed certain days as fast days or holy days (Sabbaths?). See 14, 5.

Scholars dispute whether the "weak" were converts from an ascetic sect of Judaism or converts from pagan mystery religions. The common opinion holds for converts from Judaism mainly because of the technical word used for "unclean" food (14, 4). Regardless of their identity, Paul does not condemn the converts' practices in themselves but advises against these practices because they lead to discord in the Christian community (14, 13-23).

14, 1: Paul asks the "strong," who easily understand that no food is of itself forbidden, to welcome the "weak" but not for disputes.

14, 3: Let not the "strong" despise the "weak" because of their poor understanding and their conservatism, and let not the "weak" condemn the "strong" because of their irreverence toward food.

14, 4: Paul tells the "weak" not to criticize the "strong," for it is up to the Lord to judge whether his servant (the "strong") succeeds or fails.

14, 5: See 14, 1—15, 13 n. The important point is that everyone should follow his own conviction.

14, 7-8: A Christian's entire life, and even his death, should be dedicated to Christ.

14, 9: Jesus died to be ruler over those on earth and in heaven.

14, 11: See Is 45, 23f.

written, "As I live, says the Lord, to me every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

- 12 *Charity and Peace*** Therefore every one of us will render
13 an account for himself to God. Therefore let us no longer
 judge one another, but rather judge this, that you should not
14 put a stumbling-block or a hindrance in your brother's way. I
 know and am confident in the Lord Jesus that nothing is of
 itself unclean; but to him who regards anything as unclean,
15 to him it is unclean. If, then, thy brother is grieved because
 of thy food, no longer dost thou walk according to charity.
16 Do not with thy food destroy him for whom Christ died. Let
17 not, then, our good be reviled. For the kingdom of God does
 not consist in food and drink, but in justice and peace and
18 joy in the Holy Spirit; | for he who in this way serves
19 Christ pleases God and is approved by men. Let us, then,
 follow after the things that make for peace, and let us safe-
20 guard the things that make for mutual edification. Do not
 for the sake of food destroy the work of God! All things
 indeed are clean; but a thing is evil for the man who eats
21 through scandal. It is good not to eat meat and not to drink
 wine, nor to do anything by which thy brother is offended or
22 scandalized or weakened. | Thou hast faith. Keep it to thy-
 self before God. Blessed is he who does not condemn himself
23 by what he approves. But he who hesitates, if he eats, is
 condemned, because it is not from faith; for all that is not
 from faith is sin.

15

- 1 *Self-Denial and Patience*** Now we, the strong, ought to
 bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.
2 Let every one of you please his neighbor by doing good, for

14, 16: *Destroy*: cause disaster. *Our good*: more probably in Greek, "your good," i.e., let not your eating food, which is a good act, be despised.

14, 20: *Destroy the work of God*: see "destroy" in 14, 16 n. *Who eats through scandal*: probably means "gives scandal by eating."

14, 22: Everyone should follow his own conscience ("faith"). The "strong" does wrong if he scandalizes others by eating certain foods; the "weak" does wrong if he does not eat certain foods out of human respect.

14, 23: Every act is sinful that is done with a bad conscience.

15, 1-33: Only few critics, with insufficient reasons, claim that ch. 15 did not originally form part of Romans.

15, 2: *Of you*: in Greek, "of us."

- 3 his edification; | for Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproach thee have fallen upon me."
- 4 For whatever things have been written have been written for our instruction, that through the patience and the consolation afforded by the Scriptures we may have hope. May then the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind towards one another according to Jesus Christ; |
- 6 that, one in spirit, you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7 *Mercy* Wherefore receive one another, even as Christ has received you to the honor of God. For I say that Christ Jesus has been a minister of the circumcision in order to show God's fidelity in confirming the promises made to our fathers, | but that the Gentiles glorify God because of his mercy, as it is written, "Therefore will I praise thee among the Gentiles, and will sing to thy name."
- 10 And again he says, "Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."
- 11 And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; and sing his praises, all you peoples."
- 12 And again Isaias says, "There shall be the root of Jesse, and he who shall arise to rule the Gentiles . . . in him the Gentiles shall hope."
- 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

15, 3: Paul quotes Ps 68, 10 to show that Christ's example is in harmony with revelation.

15, 8-9: In dedicating himself to the Jews ("minister of circumcision"), Christ showed God's loyalty in fulfilling the promises of assistance and salvation made to the patriarchs (v. 8). Christ's invitation to the Gentiles, to whom no promises had been made, shows God's mercy and glory (v. 9).

15, 9-12: Paul sees in scripture the conversion of the Gentiles and their praising of God's mercy.

15, 9: See Ps 17, 50.

15, 10: See Dt 32, 43.

15, 11: See Ps 116, 1.

15, 12: See Is 11, 10.

CONCLUSION

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS AND GREETINGS

- 14 *Apostle of the Gentiles* Now I for my part, my brethren, am convinced with regard to you that you yourselves are full of love, filled with all knowledge, so that you are able
 15 to admonish one another. But I have written to you rather boldly here and there, brethren—as it were to refresh your memory—because of the grace that has been given me by
 16 God, | that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles; sanctifying the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles may become acceptable, being sanctified by
 17 the Holy Spirit. I have therefore this boast in Christ Jesus
 18 as regards the work of God. For I do not make bold to mention anything but what Christ has wrought through me to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed,
 19 | with mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyri-
 20 cum I have completed the evangelization of Christ. But I have not preached this gospel where Christ has already been named, lest I might build on another man's foundation; but
 21 even as it is written, "They who have not been told of him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand."
- 22 *St. Paul's Plans* This is why I was hindered these many
 23 times from coming to you. But now, having no more work in these parts, and having had for many years a great desire to
 24 come to you, | when I set out for Spain I hope to see you as I pass through (and by you to be sped on my way there),
 25 having first enjoyed being with you for a while. Now, how-

15, 14: *Knowledge*: instruction about the faith.

15, 16: *Sanctifying the gospel*: or, "in the priestly service of the Gospel."

15, 19: *Illyricum*: the Roman province on the Adriatic Sea (the western section of modern Yugoslavia).

15, 21: Paul quotes Is 52, 15 to support his missionary method of visiting cities where a missionary other than Paul had first introduced Christ's Gospel to their inhabitants.

15, 22-29: According to Acts 21-28, Paul's plans were completely changed because he was a prisoner when he arrived in Rome.

15, 25: See 1 Cor 16, 4 n.

ever, I will set out for Jerusalem to minister to the saints
 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have thought it well to make
 27 contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. So
 it has pleased them, and their debtors they are. For if the
 Gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they should
 28 also minister to them in material things. Therefore, when
 have completed this, and have delivered to them the proceeds
 29 I will set out by way of you for Spain. And I know that
 when I come to you, I shall come with the fullness of Christ's
 blessing.

30 **Request for Prayers** Now I exhort you, brethren, through
 our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the charity of the Spirit
 31 that you help me by your prayers to God for me, | that
 may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that
 the offering of my service may be acceptable to the saints in
 32 Jerusalem; | that I may come to you in joy, by the will of
 33 God, and may be refreshed with you. Now the God of peace
 be with you all. Amen.

16

1 **Commendation of Phoebe** But I commend to you Phoebe,
 2 our sister, who is in the ministry of the church at Cenchrae,
 that you may receive her in the Lord as becomes saints, and
 that you may assist her in whatever business she may have
 need of you. For she too has assisted many, including myself.

3 **Greetings to Individuals** Greet Prisca and Aquila, my help-

15, 27: *Spiritual blessings*: the tradition which formed the basis of the later written Gospels.

15, 28: The New Testament does not mention again this projected trip to Spain. There is no positive evidence that Paul ever visited Spain. The opinion of a few critics seems most unlikely that Paul's purpose in writing to the Romans was to secure financial aid for his Spanish mission, since this purpose is mentioned for the first time in this passage. Besides, Paul customarily does not ask for much of anything to establish a new mission.

15, 31: *Unbelievers in Judea*: Paul's fears were well founded (see Acts 21, 27ff).

16, 1-2: Paul asks that Phoebe be helped when she arrives in Rome. It is conjectured that she delivered Paul's letter. *In the ministry*: literally, a "minister." *Has assisted*: literally, "became a benefactress." The precise meaning of both titles is disputed. Phoebe is mentioned in the Roman martyrology (September 3).

16, 3-16: Paul sends greetings to twenty-six individual Christians

4 ers in Christ Jesus, | who for my life have risked their own
 necks. To them not only I give thanks but also all the
 5 churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church that is in
 their house. Greet my beloved Epænetus, who is the first-
 6 fruits of Asia to Christ. Greet Mary who has labored much
 7 among you. Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and
 my fellow-prisoners, who are distinguished among the
 8 apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplia-
 9 tus, beloved to me in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our helper
 10 in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, approved
 11 in Christ. Greet the members of Aristobulus' household.
 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet the members of Narcissus'
 12 household who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphaena and Try-
 phosa who labor in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis who
 13 has labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, the elect in the
 14 Lord, and her who is his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus,
 Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who
 15 are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his
 sister, and Olympias, and all the saints who are with them.
 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of
 Christ greet you.

17 *Warning to Trouble-makers* Now I exhort you, brethren,
 that you watch those who cause dissensions and scandals con-
 trary to the doctrine that you have learned, and avoid them.
 18 For such do not serve Christ our Lord but their own belly,
 and by smooth words and flattery deceive the hearts of the
 19 simple. For your submission to the faith has been published
 everywhere. I rejoice therefore over you. Yet I would have
 you wise as to what is good, and guileless as to what is evil.
 20 But the God of peace will speedily crush Satan under your
 feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

(eight or nine among them women) and to two families in Rome.
 The apostle may have known some just by hearsay, and some may
 have been only social friends. Many of the names appear in the
 Roman martyrology. Archeologists have found many of these names
 but identification with the friends of Paul has not been established.
 Since some interpreters find it difficult to imagine how Paul could
 have known so many people in Rome without ever having been there,
 it is conjectured that this list belonged to the letter of the Ephesians.

16, 3: See Acts 18, vv. 2 and 26.

16, 5: *Church*: some commentators believe the church groups men-
 tioned here were the beginnings of parish organizations.

16, 17-18: The description is too general to identify the false
 teachers.

- ²¹ **Greetings from Corinth** Timothy, my fellow-laborer,
greet you, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kins-
²² men. I, Tertius, who have written this epistle, greet you in the
²³ Lord. Gaius, my host, and the host of the whole church,
greet you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and Quartus, our
²⁴ brother, greet you. [May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all, amen.]
- ²⁵ **Doxology** Now to him who is able to strengthen you in
accordance with my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery which has been
²⁶ kept in silence from eternal ages, | which is manifested now
through the writings of the prophets according to the precept
of the eternal God, and made known to all the Gentiles to
²⁷ bring about obedience to faith—to the only wise God, through
Jesus Christ, be honor forever and ever. Amen.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

From the structure of this epistle it is easy to surmise that Paul wrote in reply to a series of questions. (See the main divisions of the epistle below.) While at Ephesus, the apostle received members of the Corinthian church who brought him these questions (1, 11).

Very few modern critics seriously contest Paul's authorship. The unity of the epistle, however, is a subject of more controversy. Yet, most scholars, though they admit the possibility that the epistle was pieced together, seem content to read it as a unit. The date of its writing is commonly given as about 57 A.D.

Corinth was already an ancient city in the apostle's day. It was founded in the nineteenth century B.C. In classical times it flourished as a center of art and commerce. Its daughter colonies were sprinkled all over the Mediterranean Basin. The Romans leveled Corinth to the ground in 146 B.C. Julius Caesar rebuilt it with Italian colonists in 44 B.C. (Many of Paul's converts had Roman names, e.g., Crispus, Lucius.)

Corinth became the capital of Achaia in 27 B.C. Although Athens remained superior as an intellectual and cultural center, Corinth emerged as a superior political and commercial center.

The city was flanked by a seaport (Cenchrae) in the east, and by another (Lechaenum) in the west. This international city of 600,000 became a melting pot of many peoples who brought their own religions with them. It was not astonishing, therefore, that new Corinth continued its notorious reputation since classical times as a depraved city. The city's reputation was epitomized in the proverbial saying, "to live like a Corinthian," which meant to live like a libertine.

This "Vanity Fair" of antiquity was the city wherein Paul introduced Christianity. His mission there lasted for eighteen months. The converts were mostly from the Gentiles (1 Cor 12, 2), only some were from the Jews (1 Cor 7, 18). The majority of the Christians came from the poor classes, the upper classes were less represented (1 Cor 1, 26-28).

Main divisions of the First Epistle to the Corinthians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-10
2. Party Spirit, 1, 11—4, 21

Moral Disorders

3. The Incestuous Man, 5, 1-13
4. Lawsuits before Pagans, 6, 1-11
5. The Evil of Immorality, 6, 12-20

Answers to Questions

6. Marriage and Celibacy, 7, 1-40
7. Idol Offerings, 8, 1-13
8. Paul's Rights as an Apostle, 9, 1-27
9. Against Overconfidence, 10, 1-13
10. Discussion of Idol Offerings Resumed, 10, 14—11, 1

Religious Gatherings

11. The Headdress of Women, 11, 2-16
12. The Eucharist, 11, 17-34

The Spiritual Gifts

13. Their Distribution, 12, 1-31
14. A Digression on Charity, 13, 1-13
15. The Gifts of Tongues and Prophecy, 14, 1-40
16. The Resurrection, 15, 1-58
17. Conclusion, 16, 1-24

INTRODUCTION

1

¹ *Greeting* Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle
² of Jesus Christ, and Sosthenes our brother, | to the church of
God at Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ
Jesus and called to be saints with all who call upon the
³ name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place—their Lord
as well as ours. Grace be to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ *The Gifts of God* I give thanks to my God always con-
cerning you for the grace of God which was given you in
⁵ Christ Jesus, | because in everything you have been enriched
⁶ in him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; | even
as the witness to the Christ has been made so firm in you
⁷ | that you lack no grace, while awaiting the appearance of
⁸ our Lord Jesus Christ, | who will also keep you secure unto
the end, unimpeachable in the day of the coming of our
⁹ Lord Jesus Christ. God is trustworthy, by him you have been
called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. PARTY SPIRIT

¹⁰ *Nature of the Division* Now I beseech you, brethren,
by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the
same thing; and that there be no dissensions among you, but
that you be perfectly united in one mind and in one judgment.
¹¹ For I have been informed about you, my brethren, by those
of the house of Chloe, that there are strifes among you.
¹² Now this is what I mean: each of you says, I am of Paul,
or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ.

1, 1: *Sosthenes*: the ruler of the synagogue mentioned in Acts 18, 17.

1, 5: *Utterance . . . knowledge*: the facility of preaching the teachings of Christ.

1, 7: *Appearance of . . . Christ*: at the end of the world.

1, 9: *Trustworthy*: faithful to his promises. *Fellowship*: God invited them as real, not juridical, adopted sons into the community of life with Christ.

1, 10-16: These factions originated not from heresy but from personal attachment to various missionaries.

1, 11: *Those of the house of Chloe*: probably slaves of an otherwise unknown important figure.

1, 12: *Apollos*: a companion of Paul. He preached eloquently at Corinth (see Acts 18, 24-28). *Cephas*: "Rock," St. Peter's Aramaic name. It is not implied that Peter visited Corinth. *I am of Christ*:

13 | Has Christ been divided up? Was Paul crucified for you?
 Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God
 14 that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any-
 15 one should say that you were baptized in my name.
 16 I baptized also the household of Stephanas. I am not
 aware of having baptized anyone else.

17 *Salvation Not by Wisdom of Words* For Christ did not
 send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with
 wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made void.
 18 For the doctrine of the cross is foolishness to those who
 perish, but to those who are saved, that is, to us, it is
 19 the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the
 wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent I will
 reject."
 20 Where is the "wise man"? Where is the scribe? Where is
 the disputant of this world? Has not God turned to fool-
 21 ishness the "wisdom" of this world? For since, in God's
 wisdom, the world did not come to know God by "wis-
 dom," it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching,

some scholars interpret this as a slogan (of a fourth party) to counter-act the attachment to a particular person. Other scholars understand it as Paul's slogan which he suggests to everyone.

1, 14: *Crispus*: he is mentioned in Acts 18, 8. *Gaius*: probably Paul's host, mentioned in Rom 16, 23.

1, 16: *Stephanos*: mentioned in 16, 15.

1, 17—2, 16: Paul contrasts the wisdom of the Greeks at Corinth with the wisdom of God. The apostle is not anti-intellectual. He does not speak against human reason as opposed to God's wisdom but he speaks against the Greek wisdom of his day with its exaggeration of rhetoric and its pretentiousness in judging everything.

1, 17: Since the Corinthians show ignorance of the true role of missionaries, Paul proclaims his mission as an apostle, namely, as a bearer of the Gospel. He does not rely on eloquence ("wisdom of words") in preaching the Gospel but on its content. *Baptize*: following the example of Jesus and Peter, the apostle usually leaves the administration of baptism to others.

1, 18: *Perish*: those who regard the cross as foolish are on the road to their own definite destruction. *The power of God*: see Rom 1, 17 n.

1, 19-20: The passage quoted from Is 29, 14 refers to the worldly-wise politicians in the face of Assyrian invaders (v. 19). Paul, in the light of God's plan of salvation, adapts the passage to declare the futility of "wisdom" uttered by the pagan philosophers and Israelite sages.

1, 21: The wisdom of the proud Israelites and Greeks did not lead to the true knowledge of God, but Paul's preaching did.

22 to save those who believe. For the Jews ask for signs, and
 23 the Greeks look for "wisdom"; | but we, for our part,
 preach a crucified Christ—to the Jews indeed a stum-
 24 bling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, | but to those
 who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power
 25 of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of
 God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger
 than men.

26 *Their Case an Example* For consider your own call,
 brethren; that there were not many wise according to the
 27 flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. But the foolish
 things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the
 "wise," and the weak things of the world has God chosen
 28 to put to shame the strong, | and the base things of the
 world and the despised has God chosen, and the things
 29 that are not, to bring to naught the things that are; | lest any
 30 flesh should pride itself before him. From him you are in
 Christ Jesus, who has become for us God-given wisdom,
 31 and justice, and sanctification, and redemption; so that,
 just as it is written, "Let him who takes pride, take pride
 in the Lord."

2

1 *Paul's Method of Preaching* And I, brethren, when I
 came to you, did not come with pretentious speech or wis-
 2 dom, announcing unto you the witness to Christ. For I
 determined not to know anything among- you, except Jesus
 3 Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness
 4 and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my
 preaching were not in the persuasive words of wisdom, but
 5 in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, | that

1, 22: *Signs*: miracles.

1, 23: *A stumbling-block*: see Rom 9, 33 n. *Foolishness*: the Gen-
 tiles considered the cross ignominious.

1, 24-25: The crucifixion appears to naked human wisdom as
 failure and folly, but it is in reality God's power and wisdom.

1, 31: *Take pride, in the Lord*: let them boast of what Christ
 did for them.

2, 1-5: After Paul failed in his philosophical approach at Athens,
 he did not try this method again (see Acts 17, 34 n).

2, 1: *Witness to Christ*: in Greek, "witness to God."

2, 3: *In fear and . . . trembling*: not because of stage fright (see
 Phil 2, 12 n).

2, 4: *The demonstration of the Spirit and of power*: see 1 Thes 1,
 5 n.

your faith might rest, not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

- 6 *True Wisdom* Wisdom, however, we speak among those who are mature, yet not a wisdom of this world nor of
 7 the rulers of this world, who are passing away. But we speak the wisdom of God, mysterious, hidden, which God
 8 foreordained before the world unto our glory, | a wisdom which none of the rulers of this world has known; for had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.
 9 But, as it is written, "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him."
 10 But to us God has revealed them through his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.
 11 For who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things
 12 of God no one knows but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God, that we may know the things that have been
 13 given us by God. These things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in the learning of the Spirit,
 14 combining spiritual with spiritual. But the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand, because

2, 6: *Not a wisdom . . . passing away*: probably means that true wisdom is hidden even from worldly leaders or from the devils whose influence had been on the wane since Christ's victory on Easter Sunday.

2, 7: *Mysterious, hidden*: the mystery of God's plan of salvation, hidden from all eternity and finally realized by Jesus (see Eph 3, 6 n).

2, 8-10: These verses are heavily overlaid with Gnostic terms.

2, 8: *Lord of glory*: this is the strongest expression of divinity in the Old Testament.

2, 9: *"Eye has not seen"*: scholars are searching for the origin of this quotation in the Old Testament (Is 64, 4?) and in apocryphal books.

2, 10-11: *Them*: refers to "things God has prepared for those who love him" (v. 9): the plan of love, through the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. *Spirit searches*: just as no one knows the true thoughts of a man but only he himself from within his conscience, so no one truly knows God ("the things of God") except as revealed by the Spirit.

2, 12: God gave his Spirit to reveal his love. See Rom 8, 15 n and 16 n.

2, 13: *These things*: of God (see 2, 10-11 n and 2, 12 n). Paul contrasts rhetoric with the true wisdom of the Spirit. *Combining spiritual with spiritual*: may mean explaining spiritual topics to spiritual men.

¹⁵ it is examined spiritually. But the spiritual man judges all
¹⁶ things, and he himself is judged by no man. For "who has
 known the mind of the Lord, that he might instruct him?"
 But we have the mind of Christ.

3

¹ *They Cannot Receive Full Doctrine* And I, brethren,
 could not speak to you as to spiritual men but only as carnal,
² as to little ones in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with solid
 food, for you were not yet ready for it. Nor are you now
³ ready for it, for you are still carnal. For since there are
 jealousy and strife among you, are you not carnal, and
⁴ walking as mere men? For whenever one says, "I am of
 Paul," but another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere
 men?

⁵ *The Office of God's Ministers* What then is Apollos?
 What indeed is Paul? They are the servants of him whom
 you have believed—servants according as God has given to
⁶ each to serve. I have planted, Apollos watered, but God has
⁷ given the growth. So then neither he who plants is anything,
⁸ nor he who waters, but God who gives the growth. Now
 he who plants and he who waters are one, yet each will
⁹ receive his own reward according to his labor. For we are
 God's helpers, you are God's tillage, God's building.

¹⁰ *Their Responsibility and Reward* According to the grace
 of God which has been given to me, as a wise builder, I laid
 the foundation, and another builds thereon. But let every-
¹¹ one take care how he builds thereon. For other foundation
 no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is

2, 15: *All things*: the meaning of life and the history of salvation
 in the Old Testament. *He himself*: his spirituality. Some believe that
 the apostle refers to himself. Paul who is spiritual must not be
 judged by non-spiritual Corinthians.

2, 16: See Is 40, 13. Just as no one can instruct God's mind,
 neither can the Corinthians instruct Paul whose thoughts are Christ's
 thoughts.

3, 2: *Milk*: elementary doctrine. *Solid food*: advanced doctrine.

3, 4: See 1, 10-16 n.

3, 5-9: The apostles are not rivals but instruments of God to
 help the Corinthian community to grow spiritually.

3, 8: *Are one*: equal missionaries in God's service.

3, 9: The co-operation between God and men is a doctrine of
 which Paul frequently writes in his epistles.

3, 10: Paul founded the Corinthian church.

12 Christ Jesus. But if anyone builds upon this foundation
 13 gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work
 of each will be made manifest, for the day of the Lord will
 declare it, since the day is to be revealed in fire. The fire
 14 will assay the quality of everyone's work: | if his work abide
 15 which he has built thereon, he will receive reward; | if his
 work burns he will lose his reward, but himself will be
 saved, yet so as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that
 17 the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the
 temple of God, him will God destroy; for holy is the temple
 of God, and this temple you are.

18 ***Pride Not to Be Taken in Man*** Let no one deceive him-
 self. If any one of you thinks himself wise in this world, let
 19 him become a fool, that he may come to be wise. For the
 wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is
 20 written, "I will catch the wise in their craftiness." And
 again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that
 21 they are empty." Therefore let no one take pride in men.
 22 For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Ce-
 phas; or the world, or life, or death; or things present, or

3, 12-14: If anyone (Apollos, or other disciples) builds upon my foundation through his preaching and ministry with a superstructure of holiness ("gold, silver, precious stones") or with a superstructure of vainglory ("wood, hay, straw"), the quality of the work will be made known on the day of Christ's second coming ("of the Lord," not in the Greek) "with (not "in") fire." According to the prevalent opinion "fire" means judgment.

3, 14: The verse refers to the missionaries of superior holiness (see 3, 12-14 n).

3, 15: The verse refers to the vainglorious missionaries (see 3, 12-14 n). They will lose the reward of their preaching but they will be saved through "fire," a symbol of the last judgment at Christ's second coming. (Paul's focusing on the final judgment should not be interpreted as a denial of the particular judgment to take place at the death of each individual.) Moderns agree that the apostle does not think of the state of purgatory. However, some claim that he gives here the biblical foundation for the doctrine on purgatory and venial sins. Yet others maintain that this verse includes no notion of expiation (i.e., of purgatory and venial sins) but only of the final judgment.

3, 16: *Spirit of God*: the Holy Spirit (see 6, 19). What the Stoics (Seneca) most likely meant by a god in the souls was conscience.

3, 17: See Jb 5, 13.

3, 20: See Ps 93, 11.

3, 21: Let no one take pride in men, Apollos, etc. (see 1, 10-16).

3, 22: In passionate terms, Paul associates everything in time and creation with human teachers. Just as the preachers are yours because they teach you (he writes to the Christians at Corinth), so is the

23 things to come—all are yours, | and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

4

1 *Ministers of Gospel Judged by Christ* Let a man so account us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries
2 of God. Now here it is required in stewards that a man
3 be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small matter
4 to be judged by you or by man's tribunal. Nay I do not even judge my own self. | For I have nothing on my conscience, yet I am not thereby justified; but he who
5 judges me is the Lord. Therefore, pass no judgment before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in darkness and make manifest the counsels of hearts; and then everyone will have his praise from God.

6 *Corinthians Contrasted with Apostles* Now, brethren, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos by way of illustration for your sakes, that in our case you may learn not to be puffed up one against the other over a third
7 party, transgressing what is written. For who singles thee out? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not

world yours because it preaches to you of its creator. Life is yours to bring you closer to God, and through death you attain God. "Things present" and future things are at your service to draw you to God. "All are yours" is a summary of everything mentioned in this verse.

3, 23: If everything is theirs and they belong to Christ and God, then that is what should give them true greatness and security and not their belonging to petty rivaling factions. It is characteristic of Paul to begin with a trivial incident and then soar to theological implications.

4, 1-5: God, not the Corinthians, will judge the qualities of the preachers of the factions, including Paul (1, 10-16).

4, 1: *Mysteries*: the means of grace instituted for Christian life, doctrine, and for sacraments.

4, 5: *The Lord comes*: at the end of the world.

4, 6: *Apollos*: see 1, 12 n. *What is written*: according to two scholarly conjectures, this is a reference to the Old Testament quotations in 1, 19 and 31; 3, 19-20; or to Paul's preceding recommendations.

4, 7: *Who singles you out?*: for the distinction of belonging to the party of Apollos, etc? Furthermore, Paul asks what honor they received for belonging to a faction.

- 8 received it? | You are already filled! You are already made rich! Without us you reign! And would that you did reign
 9 that we too might reign with you! For I think God has set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death, seeing that we have been made a spectacle to the
 10 world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are
 11 strong! You are honored, but we are without honor! | To this very hour we hunger and thirst, and we are naked
 12 and buffeted, and have no fixed abode. And we toil, working with our own hands. We are reviled and we bless, we
 13 are persecuted and we bear with it, | we are maligned and we entreat, we have become as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now.
 14 I write these things not to put you to shame, but to admonish you as my dearest children. For although you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, did I begot
 16 you. Therefore, I beg you, be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. For this very reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my dearest son and faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my ways, which are in Christ Jesus, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
 18 Now some are puffed up, as if I were not coming to you. But I shall come to you shortly, if the Lord is willing, and I shall learn the power of those who are puffed up, not the promises. For the kingdom of God is not in word,
 21 but in power. | What is your wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of meekness?

4, 8-13: Paul contrasts the self-esteem of the Corinthians with the humble esteem that the suffering apostles have of themselves.

4, 8: There may be an allusion to the Stoics who spoke of themselves as rich and as leading in the possession of knowledge. *Would that you did reign*: spiritually by living your Christian religion.

4, 9: *Doomed*: just as the public entertainers become a spectacle in desperately fighting animals in the arena, so the apostles are doomed to death because of constant dangers and persecution.

4, 15: *Tutors*: preachers. *Fathers*: Paul was their "father" who gave them spiritual birth in Christ's Gospel.

4, 16: *Imitators of me*: in humility and suffering (see 4, 8-13 n).

4, 17: *Timothy*: see 16, 10.

4, 19: Paul will learn whether the boastful have anything worthwhile to boast about.

II. MORAL DISORDERS

I. THE INCESTUOUS MAN

5

¹ **Action to Be Taken** It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and such immorality as is not found even among the Gentiles, that a man should have his
² father's wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned so that he who has done this deed might be put
³ away from your midst. I indeed, absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though present, passed judgment
⁴ | in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ on the one who has so acted—you and my spirit gathered together with
⁵ the power of our Lord Jesus—to deliver such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit
⁶ may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your boasting is unseemly. Do you not know that a little leaven
⁷ ferments the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new dough, as you really are without leaven.
⁸ For Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed. | Therefore let us keep festival, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

5—7: These three chapters comprise the fullest treatment of the sexes in all the New Testament.

5, 1-6: A Christian was living with his stepmother, a widow or a divorced non-Christian. This type of concubinage was forbidden by the Mosaic Law, the Roman Law, and by the law of many Greek cities. Paul is angry that the Corinthians had not "excommunicated" the man before he contaminated others.

5, 1: *Immorality*: literally, "fornication," but the word was used in the general sense of impurities (see Mt 19, 9 n).

5, 5: *Satan*: see 1 Tm 1, 20 n. *Destruction of the flesh*: destruction of sinful tendencies.

5, 6: *Your boasting*: about factions (see 1, 10-16).

5, 7-8: Just as the sacrificed lamb of the Jewish passover began the period of abstinence from leavened bread (or the period of eating only unleavened bread), likewise the sacrificed Lamb of God on the cross inaugurated the period of abstinence from sin.

These verses are most used in the Easter liturgy to refer to the fruit of the resurrection, i.e., a life of "sincerity and truth." (This is the earliest reference, about 57 A.D., to the Christian feast of Easter.)

5, 7: *Old leaven*: a metaphor for the incestuous man.

9 **Punishment by Excommunication** I wrote to you in the
 10 letter not to associate with the immoral—| not meaning, of
 course, the immoral of this world, or the covetous, or the
 greedy, or idolators; otherwise you would have to leave
 11 the world. But now I write to you not to associate with one
 who is called a brother, if he is immoral, or covetous, or an
 idolator, or evil-tongued, or a drunkard, or greedy; with
 12 such a one not even to take food. For what have I to do
 with judging those outside? Is it not those inside whom
 13 you judge? | For those outside God will judge. "Expel the
 wicked man from your midst."

II. LAWSUITS BEFORE PAGANS

6
 1 **Public Litigation** Dare any of you, having a matter against
 another, bring your case to be judged before the unjust and
 2 not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will
 judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you,
 3 are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? | Do you
 not know that we shall judge angels? How much more
 4 worldly things! If, therefore, you have cases about worldly
 matters to be judged, appoint those who are rated as
 5 nothing in the Church to judge. To shame you I say it.

5, 9-13: Paul does not mean that the Christians must not associate with pagan sinners but that they must not associate with public Christian sinners.

5, 9: *Letter*: an allusion to a lost letter.

5, 11: See Rom 1, 28-31 n on the list of vices.

5, 12-13: Paul and the Christians should be concerned with judging public Christian sinners and leave the judging of pagan sinners to God.

5, 13: Paul summarizes the case of the incestuous man and Christian public sinners by quoting Dt 22, 24 which demands the expulsion of a member who threatens to corrupt the community.

6, 1: *Saints*: Christians. Paul ordinarily recommended to the Christians, when they had no determined privilege as Christians, to follow what was customary among the Jews. The Jews, e.g., were allowed to keep their own courts distinct from Roman courts.

According to the Dead Sea Scrolls, it was a capital offense in itself to turn over a member to a pagan court for capital punishment.

6, 2: In the opinion of many scholars, the Christians will partake of Christ's privilege as head of the mystical body to judge both good and evil at the end of the world. Compare Mt 19, 28 par.

6, 3: According to some scholars, the Christians will judge bad angels (see, e.g., Jude 1, 6). The meaning of the judging of the world and of angels by the Christians is a hard-to-solve problem and peculiar to Paul.

6, 4: *Rated as nothing*: an expression of sarcasm.

Can it be that there is not one wise man among you competent to settle a case in his brother's matter? But brother goes to law with brother and that before unbelievers.

7 Nay, to begin with, it is altogether a defect in you that you have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? | But you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and that to your brethren. Or do you not know that the unjust will not possess the kingdom of God? Do not err; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, | nor the effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor the evil-tongued, nor the greedy will possess the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but you have been washed, you have been sanctified, you have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

III. THE EVIL OF IMMORALITY

12 *Sacredness of the Body* All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anyone.
13 Food for the belly and the belly for food, but God will destroy both the one and the other. Now the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
14 Now God has raised up the Lord and will also raise us up

6, 7: Compare the turn-the-other-cheek recommendation in Mt 5, 39.

6, 9-10: See Rom 1, 28-31 n on the list of vices.

6, 10: *Effeminate, nor sodomites*: this literal translation from the Greek means homosexuals. Judging from the writings by the moralists of Paul's time, homosexuality was widespread. Although this evil was not always condemned by the writers of the day, e.g., Petronius, it was occasionally punished. Christian teaching opposed it unflinchingly (see Rom 1, 27).

6, 11: *Washed*: baptized. *Our Lord . . . our God*: the trinitarian formula is connected with baptism (see Mt 29, 19).

6, 12: *All things are lawful for me*: one probable opinion is that the Corinthians may have misunderstood Paul's slogan, which signified freedom from the Mosaic Law, and applied it to freedom from all moral law. The apostle, however, states: not everything is allowable ("but not all things are expedient"), and he adds that sin is enslavement ("I will not be brought under the power of anything").

6, 13: It is wrong to think, as the Corinthians seem to think, that the body is made for fornication ("immorality") just as the stomach is made for food. The body, states Paul, is made "for the Lord" to be a member of Christ's body.

6, 14: Similar to Christ's resurrection, man's body will be resurrected by God.

15 by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are mem-
 16 bers of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Chris-
 17 and make them members of a harlot? By no means! | O,
 18 do you not know that he who cleaves to a harlot, become
 19 one body with her? "For the two," it says, "shall be one
 20 flesh." But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him
 18 | Flee immorality. Every sin that a man commits is out-
 19 side the body, but the immoral man sins against his own
 20 body. Or do you not know that your members are the
 temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have
 been bought at a great price. Glorify God and bear him
 in your body.

III. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

I. MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

7

1 *Advice to the Married* Now concerning the things where-
 of you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch
 2 woman. Yet, for fear of fornication, let each man have his
 3 own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let
 the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise the
 4 wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her
 body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not
 5 authority over his body, but the wife. Do not deprive each
 other, except perhaps by consent, for a time, that you may
 give yourselves to prayer; and return together again lest Satan
 6 tempt you because you lack self-control. But this I say by way

6, 15: Since men's bodies are members of Christ's body, they should not become "members of a harlot."

6, 16: Gn 2, 24 says that in marriage "they shall be two in one flesh." Paul, almost irreverently, applies the text of Genesis to the given situation by saying that the two become one flesh not in marriage but in fornication.

6, 20: *At a great price*: in Greek, "for a price." The Greek word used here for "bought" (also used in 7, 23; Gal 3, 13, etc.), is not interpreted as the redeeming and purchasing of the souls of men from Satan by Christ. The newer trend is to understand that Paul and other New Testament writers refer to God's acquisition, a sort of "purchase," of his people through the Sinai covenant. The fundamental text is Ex 19, 5 ("... you shall be my special possession"). *And bear him*: in Greek, "therefore."

7, 1-40: The main purpose of this chapter seems to be to warn against rigorous ascetic practices in matters of sex.

7 of concession, not by way of commandment. For I would that you all were as I am myself; but each one has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that.

8 *Advice to the Unmarried* But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they so remain, even 9 as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, 10 for it is better to marry than to burn. But to those who are married, not I, but the Lord commands that a wife is not to 11 depart from her husband, | and if she departs, that she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And let not a husband put away his wife.

12 *Obligation of the Believing Spouse* To the others I say, not the Lord: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she 13 consents to live with him, let him not put her away. And if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he consents 14 to live with her, let her not put away her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but, 15 as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under bondage in such 16 cases, but God has called us to peace. For how dost thou know, O wife, whether thou wilt save thy husband? Or how dost thou know, O husband, whether thou wilt save thy wife?

17 *No Change to Be Sought* Only, as the Lord has allotted to each, as when God has called each, so let him walk 18 —and so I teach in all the churches. Was one called having been circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was one called being uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.

7, 7-8: *As I am . . . even as I*: Paul was not married. However, v. 8 does not exclude the possibility that Paul was a widower (see 9, 5 n).

7, 9: *Than to burn*: with passion (not with hell-fire).

7, 10: *The Lord commands*: see Mt 19, 9 n.

7, 14: *Sanctified*: externally by intimate relations with a member of the Church.

7, 15-16: Since the chances of the Christian spouse to convert the unbelieving consort are slight, Paul (not the Lord in his teaching on earth, 7, 12) says that the Christian is not bound to live with the unchristian partner. Although Paul does not say clearly that the Christian party may remarry, the Church has so interpreted this text. This interpretation is known as the "Pauline privilege."

19 Circumcision does not matter, and uncircumcision does not matter; but the keeping of the commandments of God
 20 is what matters. Let every man remain in the calling in
 21 which he was called. | Wast thou a slave when called? Let it not trouble thee. But if thou canst become free, make use of
 22 it rather. For a slave who has been called in the Lord, is a freedman of the Lord; just as a freeman who has been
 23 called is a slave of Christ. You have been bought with a
 24 price; do not become the slaves of men. Brethren, in the state in which he was called, let every man remain with God.

25 *The State of Virginity* Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give an opinion, as one having obtained mercy from the Lord to be trustworthy.
 26 I think, then, that this is good on account of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is.
 27 | Art thou bound to a wife? Do not seek to be freed.
 28 Art thou freed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. | But if thou takest a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have tribulation of the flesh. But I spare you that.
 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remains that
 30 those who have wives be as if they had none; | and those who weep, as though not weeping; and those who rejoice, as though not rejoicing; and those who buy, as though
 31 not possessing; and those who use this world, as though not using it, for this world as we see it is passing away.
 32 | I would have you free from care. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he
 33 may please God. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his
 34 wife; and he is divided. And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. Whereas she who is married thinks about the things of the world, how she

7, 21: It is not clear from the Greek whether Paul advises the slave to take or to pass up a chance to be freed.

7, 23: *Bought*: See 6, 20 n.

7, 26: *The present distress*: this phrase may allude to general hardships in married life or to the end of the world, "the time is short," (v. 29).

7, 28: *Tribulation of the flesh*: not difficulties coming from unruly desires but general problems of life in the world.

7, 29: *The time is short*: see 7, 26 n.

35 may please her husband. Now this I say for your benefit, not to hold you in check, but to promote what is proper, and to make it possible for you to pray to the Lord without distraction.

36 *Duty of Father to Virgin Daughter* But if any man thinks that he incurs disgrace with regard to his virgin, since she is over age, and that it ought so to be done, let him do what he will; he does not sin if she should marry.
37 But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but is free to carry out his own will, and has decided
38 to keep his virgin—he does well. Therefore both he who gives his virgin in marriage does well, and he who does not give her does better.

39 *Widows* A woman is bound as long as her husband is alive, but if her husband dies, she is free. Let her marry
40 whom she pleases, only let it be in the Lord. But she will be more blessed, in my judgment, if she remains as she is. And I think that I also have the spirit of God.

II. IDOL OFFERINGS

8

1 *General Principles* Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge
2 puffs up, but charity edifies. | If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know.

7, 35: *Not to hold you in check*: Paul does not try to persuade everyone to remain unmarried.

7, 36-38: A long-standing opinion among Catholics is: Paul advises here a father or the guardian of a virgin, who is no longer young, to give her in marriage. According to a second opinion (held by many scholars, some of them Catholics), Paul refers to the customary living of a virgin or a widow in chastity with a protector of her virtue. There is no evidence that this third or fourth century practice existed in Corinth at Paul's time. A recent opinion proposes that Paul refers to two Christians who have been engaged but decided to lead a life of virginity. Are they obliged to continue their engagement and marry?

7, 39: *In the Lord*: in union with the body of Christ, the Church. Let her marry a Christian.

7, 40: Compare 1 Tm 5, 14 n.

8, 1-13: The Corinthians must have asked Paul whether they might buy and eat meat which had been offered in pagan sacrifices. The apostle's reply is: the answer does not lie in the "knowledge" (v. 1) of the better instructed Christians who know that it would be

3 But if anyone loves God, the same is known by him.
 4 Now as for food sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are what are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (for indeed there are many gods, and many lords), yet for us there is only one God, the Father from whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.

7 **Practical Rules** But such knowledge is not in everyone. Some, still idol-conscious, eat idol offerings as such, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Now food does not commend us to God. For neither shall we suffer any loss if we do not eat, nor if we do eat shall we have any advantage. Still, take care lest perhaps this right of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if a man sees one who "has knowledge" reclining at table in an idol place, will not his conscience, weak as it is, be emboldened to eat idol offerings? And through thy "knowledge" the weak one will perish, the brother for whom Christ died. Now when you sin thus against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food scandalizes my brother, I will eat flesh no more forever, lest I scandalize my brother.

III. PAUL'S RIGHTS AS AN APOSTLE

9

1 **His Claim of Rights** Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my work in the Lord? And if to others I am not an apostle, yet to you I am. For you are the seal set upon my apostleship in the Lord. My defense against those who question me

permissible to eat this type of meat, but the answer lies in the application of charity. The Christians should not eat this meat if they thereby scandalize weak Christians who would equate the eating of this type of meat with belief in idol worship. There is a danger for weak Christians in joining their fellow Christians out of human respect. Acting in this way would mean for the weak Christians to act against their conscience (see Acts 15, 20 n).

8, 10: *Idol place*: a pagan temple and its surrounding buildings and gardens where the meat was eaten.

9, 1-14: Paul defends his rights as an apostle.

- 4.5 is this: Have we not a right to eat and to drink? Have we not a right to take about with us a woman, a sister, as do the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, 6 and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have not the 7 right to do this? What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Who feeds the flock, and does not eat of the milk of 8 the flock? Do I speak these things on human authority? 9 Or does not the Law also say these things? | For it is written in the Law of Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain." Is it for the oxen that God 10 has care? | Or does he say this simply for our sakes? These things were written for us. For he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes, in hope of partaking of 11 the fruits. If we have sown for you spiritual things, is it 12 a great matter if we reap from you carnal things? If others share in this right over you, why not we rather? But we have not used this right, but we bear all things, lest we offer 13 hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that they who minister in the temple eat what comes from the temple, and that they who serve the altar, have their share 14 with the altar? So also the Lord directed that those who preach the gospel should have their living from the gospel.
- 15 **Reason for Not Using Rights** But I for my part have used none of these rights. Neither do I write these things that so it should be done in my case. For it were better for me to die than that anyone should make void my boast. 16 For even if I preach the gospel, I have therein no ground for boasting, since I am under constraint. For woe to me 17 if I do not preach the gospel! If I do this willingly, I have a reward. But if unwillingly, it is a stewardship that has

9, 5: *A woman, a sister*: literally, in Greek, "a sister woman." Scholars often take this as a reference to the women who attended to the material needs of Christ and of the apostles (see Lk 8, 2-3). See 7, 7-8 n. *Brethren of the Lord*: see Mt 13, 55-56 n. *Cephas*: St. Peter.

9, 8-10: Paul accommodates Dt 25, 4 to illustrate that an apostle has the right to receive remuneration for his service. God provides for the oxen, how much more, then, for his apostles.

9, 12: *Others*: Apollos? Non-Christian missionaries?

9, 13: *They who minister* . . . *they who serve*: a reference to the Jewish priests (Nm 18, 8) and the pagan priests at Corinth.

9, 14: See Lk 10, 7.

9, 16: Out of gratitude for this grace of conversion (Acts 9, 15), Paul is "constrained" to preach the Gospel.

9, 17-18: Paul's purpose in preaching the Gospel is not to carry

18 been entrusted to me. | What then is my reward? That preaching the gospel, I deliver the gospel without charge, so as not to abuse my right in the gospel.

19 **Paul Is All to All** For, free though I was as to all, unto all I have made myself a slave that I might gain the more
20 converts. And I have become to the Jews a Jew that I might
21 gain the Jews; | to those under the Law, as one under the law (though not myself under the Law), that I might gain those under the Law; to those without the Law, as one without the Law (though I am not without the law of God, but am under the law of Christ), that I might gain those
22 without the Law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I
23 might save all. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may be made partaker thereof.

24 **He Makes Sure His Reward** Do you not know that those who run in a race, all indeed run, but one receives the
25 prize? So run as to obtain it. | And everyone in a contest abstains from all things—and they indeed to receive a perish-
26 able crown, but we an imperishable. I, therefore, so run as not without a purpose; I so fight as not beating the air;
27 | but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps after preaching to others I myself should be rejected.

out a "stewardship," which would entitle him to a remuneration. No. He does not claim a reward, for this is the best guarantee against the use of the preaching office as a means for self-enrichment.

9, 19-22: Paul exemplifies his missionary principle (v. 19). He adapted himself to Jews ("those under the [Mosaic] Law"), and to pagans ("those without the Law"); and "to the weak" (see 8, 1-13 n), i.e., to those who did not fully understand Christ's religion, he made concessions.

9, 19: *I was*: in Greek, "I am."

9, 22: *That I might save all*: in Greek, "that at all costs I may save some."

9, 23: Paul desires to partake of the salvation afforded by the Gospel.

9, 24-27: Paul refers to the athletic contests at the Isthmian games held at the Isthmus of Corinth.

9, 25: *A perishable crown*: the apostle alludes to a wreath of ivy or pine.

9, 26-27: *I so fight as not beating the air*: I do not engage in shadow boxing. I have a real opponent—my own body—to which by self-discipline I deliver a "knockout blow." Paul uses the technical boxing term translated here as "I chastise my body."

IV. AGAINST OVERCONFIDENCE

10

¹ *Warning from Old Testament* For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the
² cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized
³ in Moses, in the cloud and in the sea. And all ate the same
⁴ spiritual food, | and all drank the same spiritual drink (for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them,
⁵ and the rock was Christ). Yet with most of them God was not well pleased, for "they were laid low in the desert."
⁶ Now these things came to pass as examples to us, that we should not lust after evil things even as they lusted.
⁷ And do not become idolators, even as some of them were, as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink,
⁸ and rose up to play." Neither let us commit fornication, even as some of them committed fornication, and there fell
⁹ in one day twenty-three thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted, and perished by the ser-
¹⁰ pents. Neither murmur, as some of them murmured, and
¹¹ perished at the hands of the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as a type, and they were written for our correction, upon whom the final age of the world has come.

¹² *Application* Therefore let him who thinks he stands take
¹³ heed lest he fall. May no temptation take hold of you but

10, 1-11: Even though their forefathers received the types of baptism (vv. 1-2) and of the Holy Eucharist (vv. 3-4), they were punished for their sins (vv. 5-10).

10, 1-2: See the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 14, 19-22).

10, 3-4: *Spiritual food*: a reference to the manna (Ex 16, 15ff). *Spiritual drink*: see Ex 17, 6. According to many interpreters the food and the drink are a type of the Eucharist under two species.

10, 4: Paul alludes to an extrabiblical Jewish legend according to which the rock that was tapped by Moses (Ex 17, 6) accompanied the Israelites. *The rock was Christ*: since Christ was also God, the apostle equates Christ with Yahweh.

10, 5: See Nm 14, 16.

10, 7: See Ex 32, vv. 6 and 19.

10, 8: See Nm 25, 1-9.

10, 9: See Nm 21, 5-6.

10, 10: See Nm 14, vv. 2 and 36.

10, 11: *Type*: verses 1-11 form one of the most lucid examples of the existence of types in scripture and of their meaning. *The final age*: the period between Christ's first and second coming.

10, 13: *May no temptation . . . equal to*: in Greek, "no temptation has overtaken you but such as is human." The sense is: no

such as man is equal to. God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear it.

V. DISCUSSION OF IDOL OFFERINGS RESUMED

¹⁴ *The Table of the Lord* Therefore, beloved, flee from the
¹⁵ worship of idols. I am speaking as to men of sense; | judge
¹⁶ for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless,
 is it not the sharing of the blood of Christ? And the bread
 that we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the
¹⁷ Lord? Because the bread is one, we though many, are one
¹⁸ body, all of us who partake of the one bread. Behold Israel
 according to the flesh, are not they who eat of the sacrifices
¹⁹ partakers of the altar? | What then do I say? That what is
 sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?
²⁰ No; but I say that what the Gentiles sacrifice, "they sacrifice
 to devils and not to God"; and I would not have you be-
²¹ come associates of devils. You cannot drink the cup of the
 Lord and the cup of devils; you cannot be partakers of the
²² table of the Lord and of the table of devils. Or are we pro-
 voking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Practical Directions All things are lawful, but not all
²³ things are expedient. | All things are lawful, but not all
²⁴ things edify. Let no one seek his own interests, but those
²⁵ of his neighbor. Anything that is sold in the market, eat,
²⁶ asking no question for conscience' sake. "The earth is the
²⁷ Lord's, and the fullness thereof." If one of the unbelievers
 invites you, and you wish to go, eat whatever is set before
²⁸ you, and ask no question for conscience' sake. But if some-
 one says, "This has been sacrificed to idols," do not eat of it,

temptation has been inflicted upon you that went beyond human resistance.

10, 16-21: As the Christians unite with Christ's body in the Eucharist (vv. 16-17) and the Jews unite with God through their various sacrifices (v. 18), so do the pagans intend to unite through their sacrifices with their gods. Because of the phenomenon of "identification" involved in all these varieties of sacrifices, it is unbecoming for Christians to partake of a pagan banquet.

10, 20: See Dt 32, 17.

10, 22: The worship of idols provoked the Lord to jealousy, according to the Old Testament (see Dt 32, 21).

10, 23-30: See 8, 1-13 n.

10, 26: See Ps 23, 1.

for the sake of him who told you and for conscience'
 29 sake—I mean the other's conscience, not thine. For why
 should my liberty be called to judgment by another's con-
 30 science? If I partake with thanksgiving, why am I ill spoken
 of for that for which I give thanks?

31 **Give No Offense** Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or
 32 do anything else, do all for the glory of God. Do not be a
 33 stumbling-block to Jews and Greeks and to the church of
 God, even as I myself in all things please all men, not
 seeking what is profitable to myself but to the many, that
 11.1 they may be saved. Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.

IV. RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS

I. THE HEADDRESS OF WOMEN

11

2 **Rules for Men and Women** Now I praise you, brethren,
 because in all things you are mindful of me and hold fast
 3 my precepts as I gave them to you. But I would have you
 know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of
 the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.
 4 Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered,
 5 disgraces his head. But every woman praying or prophesying
 with her head uncovered disgraces her head, for it is the
 6 same as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not covered,
 let her be shaven. But if it is a disgrace for a woman to
 have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her
 7 head. A man indeed ought not to cover his head, because
 he is the image and glory of God. But woman is the glory
 8 of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man.
 9 For man was not created for woman, but woman for man.

11, 2: *Hold fast my precepts*: in Greek, "keep the traditions."

11, 3: According to the divine plan of authority, not of holiness, man is above woman.

11, 4-5: Christian women of Corinth apparently prayed and prophesied (see 12, 10 n) with their heads unveiled in public places of worship. They may have been influenced by the manners displayed by pagan Greek women in their cultic reunions or, maybe, they misunderstood Paul's explanation of Christian liberty from the Mosaic Law.

11, 5-6: Paul exaggerates, at least from the twentieth century point of view.

11, 7: The apostle gives a theological reason for what is only a custom.

11, 8-9: An allusion to the story of the creation in Gn 2, 21-23.

- 10 This is why the woman ought to have a sign of authority over her head, because of the angels.
- 11 Yet neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man in the Lord. For as the woman is from the man, so also is the man through the woman, but all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: does it become a woman to pray to God uncovered? Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear his hair long is degrading; | but for a woman to wear her hair long is a glory to her? Because her hair has been given her as a covering. But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, neither have the churches of God.

II. THE EUCHARIST

- 17 *An Abuse* But in giving this charge, I do not commend you in that you meet not for the better but for the worse.
- 18 For first of all I hear that when you meet in church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must be factions, so that those who are approved may be made manifest among you. So then when you meet together, it is no longer possible to eat the Lord's Supper.
- 21 For at the meal, each one takes first his own supper, and one is hungry, and another drinks overmuch. Have

11, 10: *A sign of authority*: the Greek literally says, "an authority" or "a power." One of the several unsatisfactory interpretations for this expression and for "because of the angels" is: the woman ought to wear a veil because of the angels who are invisibly present to preserve the order of woman's subordination to man.

11, 11: *The woman is from man . . . man through the woman*: man and woman are spiritually united as members of Christ's body. This union has its roots in creation ("for from man she has been taken" Gn 2, 23), and in generation ("the man through the woman"), but both man and woman come ultimately from God.

11, 16: Paul ends with a compromise by appealing to the prevailing custom because he feels that his reasoning has not convinced the Corinthians.

11, 20: *The Lord's Supper*: the Eucharistic meal in commemoration of the Last Supper.

11, 21-22: *At the meal*: experts generally agree that, regardless of the exact nature of the "meal" or "supper," it was taken prior to the Lord's Supper. Paul reprimands the Corinthians for overeating and for neglecting the needy at this "supper." According to the best hypothesis, the apostle advises them to take this "supper" at their homes before they convene for the celebration of the Lord's Supper (vv. 33-34). The "supper" (as distinct from the Lord's Supper) was perhaps the beginning of the *agape* ("love feast"), fully developed in the second century, and designed to promote unity and to feed the poor.

you not houses for your eating and drinking? Or do you despise the church of God and put to shame the needy? What am I to say to you? Am I to commend you? In this I do not commend you.

- 23 Institution of the Eucharist** For I myself have received from the Lord (what I also delivered to you), that the Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took
24 bread, | and giving thanks broke, and said, "This is my body which shall be given up for you; do this in remembrance
25 of me." In like manner also the cup, after he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this
26 as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim
27 the death of the Lord, until he comes." Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.
28 But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of
29 that bread and drink of the cup; | for he who eats and drinks unworthily, without distinguishing the body, eats
30 and drinks judgment to himself. This is why many among
31 you are infirm and weak, and many sleep. But if we judged
32 ourselves, we should not thus be judged. But when we are judged, we are being chastised by the Lord that we

11, 23-25: See par Mt 26, 26-29 n.

11, 24: *This is my body*: see Mt 26, 26 n. *For you*: see Lk 22, 20 n. *Do this in remembrance of me*: see Lk 22, 19 n.

11, 25: *This cup*: see Lk 22, 20 n. *New covenant*: see Mt 26, 28 n.

11, 26: Paul's account concerning the institution of the Eucharist emphasizes the "death of the Lord, until he comes" at the end of the world. John's account lays stress on "the Word became flesh" (see Jn 6, 48-59 n).

11, 27-30: The Eucharist must be received in a worthy manner.

11, 27: *Unworthily*: see 11, 21-22 n. *Judgment*: condemnation. The solemn manner in which Paul almost equates "murder" with the unworthy reception of the Eucharist points up the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

11, 30: *Sleep*: the New Testament writers refer to a Christian's death as a sleep that will cease at the resurrection. It is not known what Paul means when he writes to the Corinthians that unworthy communion is punished with illness and death. It is not necessary to understand that these punishments are due to a special divine intervention.

11, 31: If the Christians examine themselves, they shall not be punished thus.

11, 32: God's punishments are geared to make man repent and thus preserve him from final damnation.

- 33 may not be condemned with this world. Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together unto judgment. The rest I shall set in order when I come.

V. THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I. THEIR DISTRIBUTION

12

- 1 *A Principle of Discrimination* Now concerning spiritual
2 gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. You know that
when you were Gentiles, you went to dumb idols according
3 as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand that
no one speaking in the Spirit of God says "Anathema" to Jesus.
And no one can say "Jesus is Lord," except in the Holy Spirit.
4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; |
5 and there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord;
6 | and there are varieties of workings, but the same God,
7 who works all things in all. Now the manifestation of the
8 Spirit is given to everyone for profit. To one through the
Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom; and to another the

11, 33-34: See 11, 21-22 n. *Judgment*: condemnation.

12, 1-3: The Corinthians converted from paganism may have confused the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit with their former pagan notions of orgiastically generated "inspirations." The source of spiritual gifts should be seen in the light of accepted doctrine (see 1 Thes 5, 21 n). For example, no one will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to say "cursed be Jesus." On the other hand, no one can make an act of faith in the divinity of Jesus without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

12, 1: *Spiritual gifts*: these "charisms" (the Greek term) are free gifts granted by the Holy Spirit "for the edification of the church" (14, 12). The major lists of these gifts are found in vv. 8-10 and vv. 28-30; Rom 12, 6-8; Eph 4, 11. Paul never treats the gifts systematically.

12, 4-11: Although the gifts are many and varied, all of them come from the one same Holy Spirit. Since these gifts are for the benefit of the community, they should not cause division and jealousy but union and charity.

12, 4-6: Viewed as gratuitous graces, the gifts come from the Holy Spirit (v. 4); viewed as aides to the community, they derive from Christ, the head of the Church; as acts of power, the gifts come from God the Father.

12, 7: Each recipient of a gift receives it for the common good of the community.

12, 8: The gift of wisdom enables one to teach the highest truths

- 9 utterance of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; | to another faith, in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing, in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the distinguishing of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things are the work of one and the same Spirit, who allots to everyone according as he will.
- 11 For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, many as they are, form one body, so also is it with Christ.
- 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free; and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?
- 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the smelling? But as it is, God has set the members, each of them, in the body as he willed. Now if they were all one member, where would the body be? But as it is, there are indeed many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need thy help"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." Nay, much rather, those that seem the more feeble members of the body are more necessary; and those that we think the less honorable members of the body, we surround with more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts receive a more abundant

of Christ's religion. The gift of knowledge enables one to teach the elementary truths of Christ's religion.

12, 9: The gift of faith is not the theological virtue of faith but it is the charism of extraordinary confidence in God's help to accomplish difficult things. See 13, 2 and Mt 17, 19-20. The gift of healing gives to the one who is endowed with it more authority in the eyes of the people. See Acts 5, 15; 19, 12 for the cures worked by Peter and Paul.

12, 10: The gift of miracles, e.g., exorcisms (Mk 16, 17). The gift of "distinguishing of spirits" enables one to distinguish between a supernatural spiritual gift and a natural gift. For the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues see 14, 2 n.

12, 12-30: Just as all the different members form one unified human body so do all the different Christians form one body of and through Christ. The comparison of the human body with a moral body was used by Plato, Seneca, and Cicero. Paul means a union which is more than "moral."

- 24 comeliness, | whereas our comely parts have no need of it. But
 God has so tempered the body together in due portion as to
 25 give more abundant honor where it was lacking; | that there
 may be no disunion in the body, but that the members may
 26 have care for one another. And if one member suffers any-
 thing, all the members suffer with it, or if one member
 glories, all members rejoice with it.
- 27 *Christ's Mystical Body* Now you are the body of Christ,
 28 member for member. And God indeed has placed some in
 the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers;
 after that miracles, then gifts of healing, services of help,
 power of administration, and the speaking of various tongues.
 29 | Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? |
 30 Are all workers of miracles? Do all have the gift of heal-
 31 ing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? | Yet
 strive after the greater gifts.

II. A DIGRESSION ON CHARITY

13

- 1 *Its Excellence* And I point out to you a yet more excel-
 lent way. If I should speak with the tongues of men and of
 angels, but do not have charity, I have become as sounding
 2 brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and
 know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all

12, 27: *Member for member*: in Greek, "and each of you (are) members of it."

12, 28: *Apostles*: according to the common opinion, the word "apostles" does here mean not only the twelve but also missionaries endowed with the charisms of prophecy (see 14, 3) and knowledge (see 12, 8 n), respectively. See 12, 10 n on the charism of "miracles" and 12, 9 n on "healing." *Services of help*: toward the poor, the infirm and widows. *Power of administration*: in decisions affecting the community as a whole (see Rom 12, 8 n). *Tongues*: see ch. 14.

12, 31: *Greater gifts*: greater than those previously mentioned, namely, charity (see ch. 13).

13, 1-7: The famous hymn to charity is considered one of Paul's most sublime passages. (See Rom 8, 31-39 n.)

13, 1: Some commentators understand "tongues of men" as a charism (ch. 14) and "tongues of angels" as the most sublime language. Yet other experts understand the entire expression "tongues of men and angels" to mean all possible languages. *Charity . . . brass . . . cymbal*: if Paul had not charity (the supernatural virtue of love of neighbor founded on the love of God) his words would be meaningless and useless.

13, 2: *Prophecy*: see 14, 3. *Mysteries and all knowledge*: see 12, 8 n. *Faith*: see 12, 9 n.

faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I
 3 am nothing. And if I distribute all my goods to feed the
 poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, yet do not have
 charity, it profits me nothing.

4 Charity is patient, is kind; charity does not envy, is not
 5 pretentious, is not puffed up, | is not ambitious, is not self-
 6 seeking, is not provoked; thinks no evil, | does not rejoice
 7 over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth; bears with all
 things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 *Contrast with Other Gifts* Charity never fails, whereas
 prophecies will disappear, and tongues will cease, and knowl-
 9 edge will be destroyed. For we know in part and we prophesy
 10 in part; | but when that which is perfect has come, that
 11 which is imperfect will be done away with. When I was a
 child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a
 child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away the
 12 things of a child. We see now through a mirror in an obscure
 manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then
 13 I shall know even as I have been known. So there abide
 faith, hope and charity, these three; but the greatest of these
 is charity.

13, 3: *Body to be burned*: probably means a heroic sacrifice out of
 a natural motive.

13, 4-7: This is a psychological description of a charitable person.
 Some scholars suggest that Paul is reflecting on Christ.

13, 4: *Patient*: the passive aspect of charity as opposed to its
 active aspect ("kind").

13, 5: *Is not ambitious*: in Greek, "does not behave improperly."
Thinks no evil: in Greek, "does not impute evil."

13, 7: *Believes all things*: removes all suspicion. *Hopes all
 things*: hopes for amendment of sinners.

13, 10-12: The reference here may be to man's knowledge of God
 (v. 10) which is imperfect as a child's talk (v. 11) and obscure as
 the vision in a dull mirror (v. 12).

13, 12: See 1 Jn 3, 2 n. *Obscure manner*: in those days, polished
 metal and silver served as mirrors, usually hand mirrors. The reflection
 was therefore dim. A glass mirror, being bright, would not express
 Paul's idea. *Face to face*: in heaven we will know God directly. The
 point of the comparison between God's knowledge of man and man's
 knowledge of God in heaven lies in the immediate or direct manner
 of knowing, not in a comprehensive knowledge, i.e., man in heaven
 will not know God as completely as God knows man.

13, 13: Scripture experts often interpret these virtues as the
 three theological virtues. In heaven, only love will remain.

III. THE GIFTS OF TONGUES AND PROPHECY

14

1 Superiority of Prophecy Aim at charity, yet strive after
 2 the spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For
 he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to
 God; for no one understands, as he is speaking mysteries in
 3 his spirit. But he who prophesies speaks to men for edifica-
 4 tion, and encouragement, and consolation. He who speaks
 in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the
 5 church. Now I should like you all to speak in tongues, but
 still more to prophesy; for he who prophesies is greater than
 he who speaks in tongues, unless he can interpret so that
 the church may receive edification.

6 Tongues Require Interpretation But now, brethren, if I
 come to you speaking in tongues what shall I profit you, un-
 less I speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or
 7 in prophecy, or in teaching? Even inanimate instruments, like
 the flute or the harp, may produce sound, but if there is
 no difference in the notes, how shall it be known what is
 8 piped or harped? If the trumpet give forth an uncertain
 9 sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you—unless
 with the tongue you utter intelligible speech—how shall it
 be known what is said? For you will be speaking to the empty
 10 air. There are, for example, so many kinds of languages
 11 in this world and none without a meaning. If, then, I do

14, 2: The gift of tongues enabled one to speak ecstatically about the mysteries of God. Yet, since the speech was unintelligible to others, another spiritual gift was necessary to interpret to others what the words meant that were said in ecstasy. This gift of interpreting was enjoyed either by the same person who spoke in tongues (vv. 5, 13) or by another (vv. 27-28). See Acts 2, 4-13 n.

14, 3: The prophet endowed with the charismatic gift of prophecy speaks on God's authority under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In addition to his principal function as defined in this verse the prophet, at times, predicts future events (Acts 11, 27f; 21, 10f) and makes known commands and revelations of the Holy Spirit at particular moments of the Church's history (see Acts 13, 2 n).

14, 6: Paul would not be as profitable to the community if he spoke "in tongues" (see 14, 2 n) as he would be by speaking of revelation through the gift of prophecy, or by teaching them through the gift of knowledge (see 12, 8 n).

14, 7-11: The superiority of prophecy over "tongues" is illustrated by examples of musical instruments (vv. 7-9) and languages (vv. 10-11).

not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one to whom I speak, a foreigner; and he who speaks, 12 a foreigner to me. So also you, since you strive after spiritual gifts, seek to have them abundantly for the edification of the church.

13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that 14 he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, 15 but my understanding is unfruitful. What, then, is to be done? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, but I 16 will sing with the understanding also. Else if thou givest praise with the spirit alone, how shall he who fills the place of the uninstructed say "Amen" to thy thanksgiving? 17 For he does not know what thou sayest. | For thou, indeed, 18 givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank 19 God that I speak with all your tongues; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may also instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

- 20 *Functions of These Gifts* Brethren, do not become children in mind, but in malice be children and in mind mature. 21 In the Law it is written that "In other tongues and with other lips I will speak to this people, and not even so will they listen to me, says the Lord." 22 Wherefore tongues are intended as a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers; whereas prophecies, not to unbelievers, 23 but to believers. Therefore, if the whole church be assembled together and, while all are speaking with tongues, there should come in uninstructed persons or unbelievers,

14, 12: The gift of prophecy is "for the edification of the church," not the gift of tongues in itself (see 14, 2 n).

14, 13: See 14, 2 n.

14, 14-15: The person endowed with the gift of tongues should pray that he may understand his own ecstatic prayer.

14, 16: *Uninstructed*: this may refer to Christians or to both Christians and non-Christian visitors as in v. 23. If the "uninstructed" hears only the unintelligible sounds of ecstatic prayer, he will not be able to express his approval. *Amen*: the Christians took this word from the Jewish liturgy.

14, 20-21: Paul freely quotes and accommodates Is 28, 11-12 to show the superiority of prophecy over tongues with an implication that mature minds will prefer prophecy (v. 20).

14, 22: The purpose of the sensationalism connected with the gift of tongues was to attract prospective converts.

14, 23: *You are mad?*: because the audience will only hear unintelligible sounds.

24 will they not say that you are mad? Whereas if, while all are prophesying, there should come in an unbeliever or uninstructed person, he is convicted by all, he is put
25 on trial by all; | the secrets of his heart are made manifest and so, falling on his face, he will worship God, declaring that God is truly among you.

26 **Practical Directions** What then is to be done, brethren? When you come together each of you has a hymn, has an instruction, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an
27 interpretation. Let all things be done unto edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let it be by twos or at most by threes, and let them speak in turn, and let one interpret
28 But if there is no interpreter let him keep silence in the
29 church, and speak to himself and to God. Of the prophets let two or three speak at a meeting, and let the rest act
30 as judges. But if anything is revealed to another sitting
31 by, let the first keep silence. For you all can prophesy one
32 by one, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. For the spirits of the prophets are under the control of the pro-
33 phets. For God is a God of peace, not of disorder.

Order Necessary Thus I likewise teach in all the churches
34 of the saints. | Let women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted them to speak, but let them be submissive,
35 as the Law also says. But if they wish to learn anything let them ask their husbands at home, for it is unseemly for a woman to speak in church.
36 What, was it from you that the word of God went

14, 24-25: The ones who are prophesying in the assembly will give the uninstructed Christians a greater conviction of their religion and lead unbelieving visitors to conversion.

14, 29: *Act as judges*: to discern whether they have the genuine charismatic gift of prophecy or not.

14, 30: If a Christian receives an inspired message from the Holy Spirit while a prophet is addressing the assembly, let the prophet cede his right of speaking to the former.

14, 33: *I likewise teach*: not in the Greek. Read: "Thus in all the churches of the saints let women. . . ."

14, 34-35: See 1 Tm 2, 11-12 n.

14, 34: *The Law*: an allusion to Gn 3, 16: "though he (your husband) have dominion over you."

14, 35: *Ask their husbands*: Paul implies that unmarried women ask their fathers or brothers.

14, 36: Paul, foreseeing that the Corinthians might disobey him, implies that they should not act so authoritatively as if they had originated the Gospel.

37 forth? Or was it unto you only that it reached? | If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things I am writing to you are the Lord's command-
 38.39 ments. If anyone ignores this, he shall be ignored. So then, brethren, desire earnestly the gift of prophesying and do not
 40 hinder the gift of speaking in tongues. Only let all things be done properly and in order.

VI. THE RESURRECTION

15

1 *Christ's Resurrection* Now I recall to your minds, brethren, the gospel that I preached to you, which also you received,
 2 wherein also you stand, | through which also you are being saved, if you hold it fast, as I preached it to you—unless
 3 you have believed to no purpose. For I delivered to you first of all, what I also received, that Christ died for
 4 our sins according to the Scriptures, | and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to
 5 the Scriptures, | and that he appeared to Cephas, and after
 6 that to the Eleven. Then he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at one time, many of whom are with
 7 us still, but some have fallen asleep. After that he was
 8 seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, as by one born out of due time, he was seen also by me.
 9 For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.
 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me has not been fruitless—in fact I have labored more than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with

14, 39-40: A summary of ch. 14.

15, 3-7: According to many recent specialists, these verses contain a direct testimony to a fixed formula used in apostolic preaching.

15, 4: *He rose . . . according to the Scriptures*: see Acts 2, 22-36 n.

15, 5-7: See Lk 24, 49 n on the appearances. Paul does not intend to list all the apparitions; he omits, e.g., the apparitions to the women.

15, 5: *Appeared to Cephas*: see Lk 24, 34 n. *Eleven*: in Greek, "Twelve." After the disappearance of Judas there were only eleven apostles but "the Twelve" had become the title of the group.

15, 6: *Asleep*: see 11, 30 n.

15, 7: The apparition to James is not mentioned in any other scriptural passage.

15, 8: *All the apostles*: the apostles and the disciples are meant. *Born out of due time*: Paul refers to his sudden conversion which occurred without the mature preparation received by the other apostles. *Seen also by me*: see Acts 9, 3-9 n.

11 me. Whether then it is I or they, so we preach, and so you have believed.

12 **The False Doctrine** Now if Christ is preached as risen from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ risen; | and if Christ has not risen, vain then is our preaching, vain too is your faith. 13 Yes, and we are found false witnesses as to God, in that we have borne witness against God that he raised Christ— 14 whom he did not raise, if the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, neither has Christ risen; | and if Christ has not risen, vain is your faith, for you are still in your sins. Hence they also who have fallen asleep in Christ, 15 have perished. If with this life only in view we have had hope in Christ, we are of all men the most to be pitied.

20 **Christ the First-fruits** But as it is, Christ has risen from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

15, 12: It is unclear what precise aspect of the resurrection the Corinthians denied. It is clear, on the other hand, that the Greeks found it difficult to accept the doctrine of the resurrection (Acts 17, 32). This is understandable, for their long-familiar concept of resurrection was the resurrection of the gods that symbolized the birth of the seasons of the year. Besides, the Greek notion of immortality was that the soul would be liberated from the prison of the body. Why then, a Greek would ask, should the soul be reunited with its body again? It would seem that the Corinthians tended to understand Paul to be preaching about a spiritualized resurrection (see 2 Tm 2, 18 n; Rom 6, 1-11).

15, 13-19: A current Catholic interpretation no longer maintains that Paul was arguing apologetically by presenting Christ's resurrection as proof of the Christians' resurrection at the end of the world.

On the contrary, the apostle writes: according to God's positive decree, the Head (Christ) cannot have risen without the Body (Christians). Therefore, if you Corinthians deny the resurrection of the bodies of Christians at the end of the world, you deny thereby that Christ arose from the dead. Besides, since Christ's resurrection is one act connected with his passion and death, you are also denying that Christ redeemed us and, hence, "you are still in your sins" (v. 17).

15, 20-28: Christ, the first one to rise from the dead, washed away the sins that caused men's death.

15, 20-22: Hear Handel's *Messiah*.

15, 20: St. Anselm stresses Christ's death as the meritorious cause of man's redemption; St. Thomas stresses Christ's humanity as the instrumental cause of man's redemption; St. Paul, on the other hand, depicts the redemption as a return of sinful man to God. Man was with God before original sin; Christ returned man to God by becoming the "first-fruits" of man to return to God. See Rom 4, 25 n.

- 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also comes resurrection of the dead.
- 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made
- 23 to live. But each in his own turn, Christ as first-fruits, then they who are Christ's, who have believed, at his coming.
- 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when he does away with all sovereignty,
- 25 authority and power. For he must reign, until "he has
- 26 put all his enemies under his feet." And the last enemy to be destroyed will be death, for "he has put all things
- 27 under his feet." But when he says | all things are subject to him, undoubtedly he is excepted who has subjected
- 28 all things to him. And when all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be made subject to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all.

- 29 **Practical Faith** Else what shall they do who receive Baptism for the dead? If the dead do not rise at all, why then do
- 30 people receive Baptism for them? And we, why do we
- 31 stand in jeopardy every hour? I die daily, I affirm it, by the very pride that I take in you, brethren, in Christ Jesus
- 32 our Lord. If, as men do, I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead do not rise, "let us eat

15, 21-22: See Rom 5, 15-19 n.

15, 23: *Who have believed*: omit.

15, 24: *Sovereignty, authority, and power*: all human and diabolic forces hostile to God.

15, 25: See Ps 109, 2.

15, 26: See Ps 8, 7 n. Christ's last victory will be over death, here personified, which will no longer claim victims. Moreover, Christ will bring the dead back to life.

15, 27: *Subject to him*: to God the Father. *He is excepted*: Christ is excepted.

15, 28: *That God may be all in all*: or, "that God may be all things to everyone." See Eph 1, 14 n.

15, 29-34: As an argument that the dead Christians will rise at the end of the world, Paul alludes to a custom of receiving "baptism of the dead." There are over sixty conjectures on the meaning of this custom. One of these conjectures is that Christians received baptism in substitution for relatives and friends who died before they could receive the sacrament. If the dead will not be resurrected, such a custom would be useless, Paul implies.

15, 31: For the sake of Jesus, the apostle suffers daily for the Corinthian church.

15, 32: If there were no resurrection, what profit would there have been in fighting the adversaries ("beasts") at Ephesus out of human motives only ("as men do")? "*Let us . . . die*": Paul cites the

33 and drink for tomorrow we shall die." Do not be let
 34 astray, "evil companionships corrupt good morals." Awake
 as you should, and do not sin; for some have no knowledge
 of God. To your shame I say so.

35 *The Mode of the Resurrection* But someone will say
 "How do the dead rise? Or with what kind of body do they
 36 come?" Senseless man, what thou thyself sowest is not
 37 brought to life, unless it dies. And when thou sowest, thou
 dost not sow the body that shall be, but a bare grain, per-
 38 haps of wheat or something else. But God gives it a body
 even as he has willed, and to each of the seeds a body
 39 of its own. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is
 one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds
 40 another of fishes. There are also heavenly bodies and
 earthly bodies, but of one kind is the glory of the heav-
 41 enly, of another kind the glory of the earthly. There is
 one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon
 and another of the stars; for star differs from star in glory
 42 | So also with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown
 43 in corruption rises in incorruption; what is sown in dis-
 honor rises in glory; what is sown in weakness rises in
 44 power; what is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body

prophet's (Is 22, 13) warning of imminent calamity if the people remain impenitent. They reply in mockery. "if there will be a calamity let us eat . . ." Compare Isaiah's words with Horace, *Odes*, 1, 4.

15, 33: This quotation from *Thais*, a comedy written by Menander in the fourth century B.C., does not imply that Paul had read or seen the play. The saying may have become a proverbial expression and in using it the apostle means, perhaps, that Christians should not associate with "evil companions" who deny the resurrection.

15, 34: *No knowledge of God*: of his goodness and of his power to resurrect the dead.

15, 35b-49: In this passage, the apostle answers the question: With what kind of body do the dead arise?

15, 37-38: God produces the stalk which was potentially present in the seed. Paul implies that the relation between the glorified body and the natural body is the same as that between stalk and seed.

15, 39: Since there are differences everywhere in nature it should not come as a surprise that there will be a difference between the natural and the glorified body.

15, 40-41: Bodies in the skies differ from bodies on the earth and the former differ among themselves. *Star differs from star in glory*: this text does not signify the varying degrees of glory of the resurrected bodies in heaven at the end of the world.

15, 42: *Incorruption*: immunity from death.

15, 43: *Glory*: splendor. *Power*: some scholars interpret this word to refer to the power by which the glorified body can travel with incredible speed.

The Natural and the Spiritual Body If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is
 45 written, | "The first man, Adam, became a living soul";
 46 the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the
 spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then the
 47 spiritual. The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second
 48 man is from heaven, heavenly. As was the earthy man, such
 also are the earthy; and as is the heavenly man, such also are
 49 the heavenly. Therefore, even as we have borne the likeness
 of the earthy, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly.

50 *Final Glory of the Body* Now this I say, brethren, that
 flesh and blood can obtain no part in the kingdom of
 God, neither shall corruption have any part in incorruption.
 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall all indeed rise, but we
 52 shall not all be changed—| in a moment, in the twinkling
 of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound,
 and the dead shall rise incorruptible and we shall be
 53 changed. For this corruptible body must put on incorrup-
 54 tion, and this mortal body must put on immortality. But
 when this mortal body puts on immortality, then shall
 come to pass the word that is written, "Death is swallowed
 55 up in victory! O death, where is thy victory? O death,
 where is thy sting?"
 56 Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin
 57 is the Law. But thanks be to God who has given us the
 victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast and immov-

15, 45: See Gn 2, 7.

15, 50-58: Paul answers the question raised in v. 35a: "How do the dead rise?"

15, 51: In Greek, "We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed." The meaning is: those who happen to be alive when the end of the world comes will not die, but their natural bodies will be instantaneously (v. 52) transformed into glorified bodies. These few will constitute the exception to the general rule that all men must die (see 1 Thes 4, 15-18 n).

15, 52: *Trumpet*: not to be taken literally since it is part of the description of the last day (see Za 9, 14). *We shall be changed*: the "we" can very well be understood to mean those who are alive at the end of the world as explained in 1 Thes 4, 15-18 n.

15, 54-55: At the end of the world when the bodies will be resurrected and glorified (thus conquering death), the words of Is 25, 8 and Os 13, 14 will be fulfilled.

15, 56: Christ not only triumphed over death but over sin, the cause of death. Sin worked havoc through the Mosaic Law, as Paul often says in his epistle to the Romans (see Rom 4, 15 n).

able, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

CONCLUSION

16

- 1 *The Collection*** Now concerning the collection being made for the saints, as I have ordered the churches of Galatia, do you also. On the first day of the week, let each one of you put aside at home and lay up whatever he has in mind to, so that the collections may not have to be made after I have come. But when I am with you, whomever you may authorize by giving credentials, them I will send to carry your gift to Jerusalem. And if it is important enough for me also to go, they shall go with me.
- 5 *St. Paul's Plans*** But I shall come to you after passing through Macedonia (for I mean to pass through Macedonia) but with you I shall perhaps remain or even winter, so that you may speed me wherever I may be going. For I do not wish to see you just now in passing by, for I hope to stay some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I shall stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a door has been opened to me, great and evident, and there are many adversaries.
- 10** Now if Timothy comes, see that he be with you without fear, for he works the work of the Lord just as I do.
- 11** Therefore, let no one despise him, but speed him on his way in peace that he may come to me, for I am awaiting him with the brethren.
- 12** With regard to our brother Apollos, I earnestly besought him to come to you with the brethren, and he was quite unwilling to come at present; but he will come when he has leisure.

16, 1: Paul refers to the collection which he made among the Gentile Churches to help the poor Christians at Jerusalem (see Gal 2, 10).

16, 2: *The first day of the week*: Sunday.

16, 4: *Important enough*: if the sum of money is large enough. According to Rom 15, 25, Paul eventually did go to Jerusalem.

16, 6: According to Acts 20, 1-3, the apostle spent the winter at Corinth.

16, 9: Paul sees great chances of success, though there will be "many adversaries." *Evident*: in Greek, "effective."

16, 10: *Timothy*: see Acts, 19, 22.

16, 12: *Apollos*: see 1, 12 n.

- 13** *Final Directions and Greetings* Watch, stand fast in the
14 faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in
15 charity. Now I beseech you, brethren—you know that the household of Stephanas and of Fortunatus are the first-fruits of Achaia, and have devoted themselves to the service
16 of the saints—to such as these do you also be subject, and
17 to every helper and worker. I rejoice at the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because what was
18 lacking on your part they have supplied; | for they have refreshed both my spirit and yours. To such as these, therefore, give recognition.
19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla with the church at their house greet you heartily in the
20 Lord. | All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.
21.22 I Paul greet you, with my own hand. If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.
23 Maranatha. | The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
24 | My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

16, 15: *Stephanas*: see 1, 16.

16, 17: *Fortunatus and Achaicus*: otherwise unknown.

16, 19: *Aquila and Priscilla*: see Acts 18, 2 n.

16, 20: *A holy kiss*: the expression is found about half a dozen times in the New Testament. A kiss, as an accepted form of respectful greeting (Lk 22, 48), was adopted by the early Christians as a symbol of "holy" Christian fellowship.

16, 21: Paul authenticates his letter as explained in 2 Thes 3, 17 n.

16, 22: *Anathema*: cursed.

16, 23: *Maranatha*: this Aramaic word means "the Lord comes," or, "Our Lord, come." The meaning of this ejaculatory prayer was most probably a wish that Christ would return to earth for the second and last time.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote 2 Cor from Macedonia about 57 A.D. The epistle was occasioned by the joyful report of Titus on the Corinthians (7, 5-7). In this second letter to the Corinthians, chiefly written in self-defense against his opponents, the apostle makes three allusions that continue to puzzle scholars. First, Paul alludes to a sorrowful visit with the Corinthians (2, 1-4). Many scholars believe that he made this visit after he wrote the first epistle, but before he wrote the second.

Then, Paul alludes to an "offender" (see 2, 5-10 n; 7, 12 n). Scholars place this incident at Corinth during a visit which he may also have made between his two epistles to the Corinthians. Or, the "offender" may have maltreated one of Paul's missionary workers at Corinth after the apostle's departure.

The third allusion is to "a tearful letter," so called because Paul states that he wrote it "with many tears" (2, 4). Scholars believe that this refers to an apparently lost intermediate letter alluded to in 2, 3-9; 7, 8-12.

Main divisions of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-14
2. The Apostle Explains His Delay, 1, 15—2, 17
3. The Apostle Defends His Assurance, 3, 1—5, 10
4. The Apostle Defends His Sincerity, 5, 11—7, 1
5. The Apostle Defends His Previous Letter, 7, 2-16
6. The Collection for the Poor Christians in Jerusalem, 8—9
7. The Apostle Defends His Apostolate, 10, 1—13, 10
8. Conclusion, 13, 11-13

1

1 Greeting Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of
2 Achaia: | grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Comfort in Trouble Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all
4 comfort, | who comforts us in all our afflictions, that we also may be able to comfort those who are in any distress by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted by God.
5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also through
6 Christ does our comfort abound. For whether we are afflicted, it is for your instruction and salvation; or whether we are comforted, it is for your comfort; which shows its efficacy in the endurance of the selfsame sufferings that we also
7 suffer. And our hope for you is steadfast, knowing that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so will you also be of the comfort.

8 Persecution and Deliverance For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of the affliction which came upon us in Asia. We were crushed beyond measure—beyond our strength,
9 so that we were weary even of life. Yes, we have been carrying, within our very selves, our death sentence; in order that we may not trust in ourselves, but in God who
10 raises the dead. He it is who delivered us, and will deliver us, from such great perils; and in him we have hope to
11 be delivered yet again, | through the help of your prayers for

1, 1: *Achaia*: southern Greece.

1, 3-7: The central note is comfort. The word "comfort" is used ten times as verb or noun (in Greek).

1, 8-9: Paul alludes to a narrow escape from death. Many conjectures are made to identify this incident. *Asia*: the Roman province in western Asia Minor.

1, 9: A suggested translation is: "Yes, we thought that we had received our death sentence; yet this was designed to make us trust not in ourselves but in God who raises the dead." By the last clause Paul may mean: but what would death have mattered since God will always be master of the dead.

1, 11: The meaning of this involved verse is: God will continue to rescue us if you will continue to pray for us. Then, with all of

us. Thus, for the gift bestowed on us at the instance of many persons, thanks will be given by many on our behalf

- 12 **His Sincerity** For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity—not in carnal wisdom, but in the grace of God—we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with
 13 you. For we write nothing to you that you do not read and understand. Indeed, I hope you will always understand.
 14 | even as you have understood us in part, that we are your boast, as you will also be ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. PERSONAL DEFENSE

I. THE APOSTLE EXPLAINS HIS DELAY

- 15 **He Is Not Fickle** With this assurance I meant, in order
 16 that you might enjoy a double grace, to visit you first, | and to pass through you into Macedonia, and from Macedonia to come again to you, and by you to be sent forward on my way
 17 to Judea. Now in this my intention, did I show fickleness? Or are my plans made according to the flesh, so that with
 18 me it is now "Yes" and now "No?" | God is my witness
 19 that our message to you is not both "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you
 by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not now
 20 "Yes" and now "No," but only "Yes" was in him. For all

you praying there will be many to thank God for the favor he granted us.

1, 12: *Boast*: a characteristic word in 2 Cor. *Carnal wisdom*: self-centered interest.

1, 14: At the end of the world, when Christ will come again, the Corinthians will be proud of what Paul did for them, and he will be proud of their faith.

1, 15: The apostle's enemies apparently accused him of being fickle.

1, 19-21: Paul parenthetically remarks that Christ is the affirmative answer to the Old Testament promises of the Messiah and his kingdom. In fact, the Christians respond "Amen" ("so be it") in their assemblies to Christ's fulfillment of these promises. Paul and the Corinthian converts are consecrated (see 1, 21 n) to God through Christ by means of both the baptismal seal and the Holy Spirit as a pledge of celestial happiness.

1, 19: *Silvanus and Timothy*: Silas (identical with Silvanus) and Timothy worked with Paul at Corinth, according to Acts 18, 5.

promises of God find their "Yes" in him; and therefore through him also rises the "Amen" to God unto our glory.
 21 Now it is God who is warrant for us and for you in
 22 Christ, who has anointed us, | who has also stamped us with his seal and has given us the Spirit as a pledge in our hearts.

23 *His Wish to Spare Them* Now I call God to witness against my soul that it was to spare you that I did not again come to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but rather we are fellow-workers in your joy; for in faith you stand.

2

1 But I made up my mind not to come to you again in
 2 sorrow. For if I make you sad, who can gladden me, save
 3 the very one that is grieved by me? And I wrote to you as I did, that when I come I may not have sorrow upon sorrow from those who ought to give me joy; for I trust
 4 in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For I wrote to you in much affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears, not that you might be grieved, but that you might know the great love I have for you.

5 *He Pardons the Offender* Now if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but in a measure (not to be
 6 too severe) all of you. For such a one this punishment
 7 meted out by the many is sufficient. On the contrary, then, you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest perchance

1, 21: *Anointed us*: one opinion is that this expression refers to the commissioning of the apostles to carry out their ministry (Acts 13, 2).

1, 22: See 5, 5 n.

1, 23: Paul did not visit the Corinthians because he would have had to reprimand them. *You stand*: firmly.

2, 1-4: The apostle refers to his visit to the Corinthians after he had written the first epistle to them, and to a lost letter.

2, 4: *Wish many tears*: see Introduction to the epistle on the "tearful letter."

2, 5-10: Paul refers to one of the Corinthians who opposed him or one of his fellow missionaries after he had written his first epistle to them, and before he wrote the second. (See 7, 12 n and the Introduction to 2 Cor.) The apostle attributes the grief more to the Corinthian community than to himself.

2, 7: On account of Paul's letter, which eventually was lost, the community had punished the offender.

8 he be overwhelmed by too much sorrow. Therefore I exhort
 9 you to assure him of your love for him. For to this very
 end also did I write, that I might test you and know whether
 10 you are obedient in all things. Whom you pardon anything
 I also pardon. Indeed, what I have forgiven—if I have
 forgiven anything—I have done for your sakes, in the
 11 person of Christ, | that we may not be defeated by Satan;
 for we are not unaware of his devices.

12 **Thanksgiving for Good News** Now when I came to
 Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, though I had there a
 13 great opportunity in the Lord, | I had no peace of mind,
 because I did not find Titus my brother. And so, bidding
 14 them farewell, I went on to Macedonia. But thanks be to
 God who always leads us in triumph in Christ Jesus, mani-
 festing through us the odor of his knowledge in every place.
 15 For we are the fragrance of Christ for God, alike as regards
 16 those who are saved and those who are lost; to these an
 odor that leads to death, but to those an odor that leads
 17 to life. And for such offices, who is sufficient? | We, at
 least, are not, as many others, adulterating the word of
 God; but with sincerity, as coming from God, we preach
 in Christ in God's presence.

II. THE APOSTLE DEFENDS HIS ASSURANCE

3

1 **They Are His Commendation** Are we beginning again to
 commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some do, letters of
 2 commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written
 on our hearts, which is known and read by all men;
 3 | clearly you are a letter of Christ, composed by us,
 written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,
 not on tablets of stone but on fleshly tablets of the heart.

2, 11: If not pardoned, the offender may despair and thus be
 "captured" by Satan.

2, 12: *Opportunity*: to preach the Gospel.

2, 14: *In triumph*: Titus finally brings Paul good news from
 Corinth (see 7, 6).

2, 15-16: The preaching of the apostle led to spiritual death to
 those who refused it and to glory for those who accepted it.

2, 17: *Adulterating*: literally, "trading in the word of God." *As
 many others*: an allusion to the same false teachers who are referred
 to as "some" in 3, 1.

3, 1: Paul seems to have been accused of boasting.

- 4 Excellence of the New Law** Such is the assurance I have
5 through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient of
 ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our
6 sufficiency is from God. He also it is who has made us fit
 ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the
 spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.
7 Now if the ministration of death, which was engraved
 in letters upon stones, was inaugurated in such glory that
 the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the
 face of Moses on account of the transient glory that shone
8 upon it, | shall not the ministration of the spirit be still
9 more glorious? For if there is glory in the ministration
 that condemned, much more does the ministration that
10 justifies abound in glory. For though the former ministra-
 tion was glorified, yet in this regard it is without glory,
11 because of the surpassing glory of the latter. For if that
 which was transient was glorious, much more is that glorious
 which abides.
- 12 The Veil Is Taken Away** Having therefore such hope, we
13 show great boldness. We do not act as Moses did, who
 used to put a veil over his face that the Israelites might
 not observe the glory of his countenance, which was to
14 pass away. But their minds were darkened; for to this day,

3, 4: The apostle's assurance of their fidelity to him is their flourishing church, which in itself is a letter of recommendation from him (vv. 2-3).

3, 6: *The new covenant*: the same as "this cup is the new covenant" (1 Cor 11, 25). *Letter . . . spirit . . . gives life*: see Rom 7, 6 n.

3, 7: *The ministration of death*: the Mosaic Law (see Rom 5, 20 n). *Glory . . . Moses . . . glory*: see Ex 34, 30.

3, 8: *The ministration of the spirit*: the Gospel, the new law of Christ.

3, 9: *Condemned*: see "the ministration of death" in 3, 7 n.

3, 10: If the Mosaic Law enjoyed the "glory" of having been delivered by God and if it reflected him, that Law had no glory in comparison with the superior splendor of the new law.

3, 12: Since the superiority of the Gospel in glory and permanence gives Paul "such hope," he feels "bold" in his preaching.

3, 13: *The glory . . . pass away*: one of several probable translations is: "the end of that which was passing away." Paul, contrary to what the Old Testament writer meant, accommodates Ex 34, 33-35 to mean that the purpose of the veil over the face of Moses was to prevent the Israelites from seeing the prophet's facial splendor fade away. This fading, according to Paul's accommodation, signified the transient character of the Mosaic Law.

3, 14: *To them*: to the Jews who disbelieved in Christ as the divine Messiah.

when the Old Testament is read to them, the selfsame veil remains, not being lifted to disclose the Christ in whom it is made void. Yes, down to this very day, when Moses is read, the veil covers their hearts; | but when they turn in repentance to God, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is the spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with faces unveiled, reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into his very image from glory to glory, as through the Spirit of the Lord.

4

1 Discharging therefore this ministry in accordance with
2 the mercy shown us, we do not lose heart. On the contrary, we renounce those practices which shame conceals, we avoid unscrupulous conduct, we do not corrupt the word of God; but making known the truth, we commend ourselves to
3 every man's conscience in the sight of God. And if our gospel also is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are
4 perishing. In their case, the god of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds, that they should not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of
5 God. For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as
6 Lord, and ourselves merely as your servants in Jesus. For God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts, to give enlightenment concerning the knowledge of the glory of God, shining on the face of Christ Jesus.

3, 17: *The Lord is the spirit*: Paul does not identify Jesus with the Holy Spirit. It would be contrary to his whole teaching. The exhortatory tone of this verse means that belief in the Lord gives man a spirit of freedom in contrast with the spirit of slavery to the precepts of the Mosaic Law (see Gal 4, 31 n).

3, 18: All of us Christians with unveiled faces (in contrast with the one veiled face [of Moses] in Old Testament times) reflect the glory of Jesus as we are transformed into his likeness from one glory to another. This transformation comes from the Christians' freedom of belief in the Lord (see 3, 17 n).

4, 1: *Mercy*: Paul alludes to his mission of preaching granted to him by the mercy of God at his conversion.

4, 2: *Practices . . . conceals*: unfair ways of acting; an allusion to the false teachers.

4, 3: Perhaps the apostle was accused of obscuring the meaning of the Gospel.

4, 4: *Christ . . . the image of God*: see Col 1, 15.

4, 6: *For God . . . darkness*: in Greek, "For God who said, 'Out of darkness light shall shine'" (Gn 1, 3). *Shone in our hearts*: a probable allusion to Paul's conversion (Acts 26, 16-18).

- 7 *Frailty and Support*** But we carry this treasure in vessels of clay, to show that the abundance of the power is God's
8 and not ours. In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not distressed; we are sore pressed, but we are not destitute;
9 | we endure persecution, but we are not forsaken; we
10 are cast down, but we do not perish; | always bearing about in our body the dying of Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame.
11 For we the living are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may
12 be made manifest in our mortal flesh. Thus death is at
13 work in us, but life in you. But since we have the same spirit of faith, as shown in that which is written—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believed, where-
14 fore we also speak. For we know that he who raised up Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus, and will place us
15 with you. For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which abounds through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound, to the glory of God.
16 Wherefore we do not lose heart. On the contrary, even though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is
17 being renewed day by day. For our present light affliction, which is for the moment, prepares for us an eternal weight
18 of glory that is beyond all measure; | while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

5

- 1 *Reward after Death*** For we know that if the earthly house in which we dwell be destroyed, we have a building

4, 7: To forestall any misunderstanding of pride, the apostle says that he and his fellow preachers carry the "treasure" of the Gospel. *Vessels of clay*: weak mortal bodies. See Gn 2, 7 as a probable source of this expression.

4, 10: Their sufferings in the ministry repeat those of the Lord (the "dying of Jesus").

4, 12: The physical lives of the missionaries are wearing out, but the word of God that they preach gives spiritual life to the Christians.

4, 13: Ps 115, 10.

4, 14: *Place us with you*: in heaven.

4, 16: *Outer man*: the body.

5, 1-10: There are at least seven interpretations of this difficult passage concerning the *parousia*, i.e., the second coming of Christ at the end of the world. For the current interpretation see all the annotations from 5, 1 n to 5, 9 n.

5, 1: *House*: the Greek word "tent" is taken from nomadic life to

- from God, a house not made by human hands, eternal in the heavens. And indeed, in this present state we groan, yearning to be clothed over with that dwelling of ours which is from heaven; | if indeed we shall be found clothed, and not naked. For we who are in this tent sigh under our burden, because we do not wish to be unclothed, but rather clothed over, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he who made us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as its pledge.
- Always full of courage, then, and knowing that while we are in the body we are exiled from the Lord—for we walk by faith and not by sight—we even have the courage to prefer to be exiled from the body and to be at home with the Lord. And therefore we strive, whether in the body or out of it, to be pleasing to him. For all of us must be made manifest before the tribunal of Christ, so that each one may receive what he has won through the body, according to his works, whether good or evil.

III. THE APOSTLE DEFENDS HIS SINCERITY

- 11 *His Labor for God and Souls*** Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade men; but to God we are manifest. And I hope also that in your consciences we are manifest.
- 12** We are not again commending ourselves to you; but we are giving you occasion to boast about us, that you may have an answer for them who glory in appearances

symbolize the transitory character of man's life on earth. *A building . . . in the heavens*: a glorified body.

5, 2-4: The apostle desires to be among the living at the end of the world (see 1 Thes 4, 15-18 n) so that his natural body may attain its glorified state without passing through death.

5, 3: *Clothed . . . naked*: if, at the end of the world, we are found alive and not dead. (There are several other equally probable translations of v. 3.)

5, 5: God gave us the Holy Spirit in baptism as a guarantee for a glorified body. Compare Eph 1, 14 n.

5, 8: If to be with Christ it is necessary to die, then we prefer death (see 5, 2-4 n).

5, 9: *In the body . . . out of it*: live a holy life on earth, so that after you die you will be pleasing to God when you meet him (see v. 10).

5, 11: *The fear of the Lord*: the majority interprets this expression to mean in this context the fear instilled by the thought of God's judgment. Compare "fear of the Lord" in Prv 1, 7 n.

5, 11b: The meaning is: God knows the good lives we are living, and I hope you know it also.

13 and not in heart. For if we were out of our mind, it
 14 was for God; if we are sane, it is for you. For the love
 of Christ impels us, because we have come to the con-
 15 clusion that, since one died for all, therefore all died; | and
 that Christ died for all, in order that they who are alive
 may live no longer for themselves, but for him who died
 for them and rose again.

16 So that henceforth we know no one according to the
 flesh. And even though we have known Christ according
 17 to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer. If then
 any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the former
 18 things have passed away; behold, they are made new! But
 all things are from God, who has reconciled us to him-
 self through Christ and has given to us the ministry of
 reconciliation.

19 For God was truly in Christ, reconciling the world to
 himself by not reckoning against men their sins and by
 entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

20 *Ambassadors of Christ* On behalf of Christ, therefore,
 we are acting as ambassadors, God, as it were, appealing
 through us. We exhort you, for Christ's sake, be reconciled
 21 to God. For our sakes he made him to be sin who knew
 nothing of sin, so that in him we might become the justice
 of God.

6

1 Yes, working together with him we entreat you not to
 2 receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In an
 acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation
 I have helped thee."

Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the

5, 13: Paul may have been accused of boasting about his extra-ordinary spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14, 18).

5, 14-15: See Rom 5, 12-21.

5, 16: No one must be judged according to mere human standards, even though before his conversion the apostle judged Christ in this way, i.e., he judged that Jesus was only a man. Paul does not mean that he knew Jesus personally.

5, 21: *To be sin*: Christ carried the burden of sin through suffering, so that God would justify man (see Rom 1, 17 on the "justice of God").

6, 1: *With him*: with God.

6, 2: See Is 49, 8.

3 day of salvation! We give no offense to anyone, that our
 4 ministry may not be blamed. On the contrary, let us conduct ourselves in all circumstances as God's ministers, in much patience; in tribulations, in hardships, in distresses;
 5 | in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults; in labors, in sleepless nights, in fastings; | in innocence, in knowledge, in long-sufferings; in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in unaffected love; | in the word of truth, in the power of God; with the armor of justice on the right hand and on the
 8 left; | in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet truthful, as unknown and yet
 9 well-known, | as dying and behold, we live, as chastised but not killed, | as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing yet possessing all things.
 11 We are frank with you, O Corinthians; our heart is
 12 wide open to you. In us there is no lack of room for you, but in your heart there is no room for us. Now as having a recompense in like kind—I speak as to my children—be you also open wide to us.

14 *Avoid Close Ties with Unbelievers* Do not bear the yoke with unbelievers. For what has justice in common with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what part
 16 has the believer with the unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God says, "I will dwell and move among them, I will be their God and they shall be my people."
 17 Wherefore, "Come out from among them, be separated,

6, 3: In Greek, "we give offense in nothing."

6, 4-5: Paul lists nine ways in which his patience and that of his fellow missionaries was tested.

6, 4: *Let us . . . circumstances*: in Greek, "we commend ourselves in everything."

6, 6-9: The apostle lists nine ways by which he and his fellow missionaries commended themselves.

6, 14-16: The apostle strengthens his prohibition of close ties with unbelievers by five questions. He does not seem to be prohibiting only mixed marriages.

6, 15: *Belial*: literally, in Hebrew, "worthlessness." The Jews used it metaphorically for the devil.

6, 16b: In this quotation, Paul mingles Lv 26, 11-12 with Ez 37, 27.

6, 17: Quoted from Is 52, 11, but the last line is perhaps from Ez 20, 34.

18 says the Lord, and touch not an unclean thing; | and I will welcome you in, and will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord almighty."

7

1 Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

IV. THE APOSTLE DEFENDS HIS PREVIOUS LETTER

2 *Love for the Corinthians* Make room for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken
3 advantage of no one. I am not saying this to condemn you; for I have already said that you are in our hearts, to
4 die together and to live together. Great is my confidence in you, great my boasting about you. I am filled with comfort, I overflow with joy in all our troubles.

5 For indeed when we came to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest; we had troubles on every side, conflicts without
6 and anxieties within. But God, who comforts the humble,
7 comforted us by the arrival of Titus. And not by his arrival only, but also by the comfort which he himself experienced in you. He told us of your longing, of your sorrow, of your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced yet more.

8 *Their Repentance* Wherefore, although I made you sorry by my letter, I do not regret it. And even if I did regret it, seeing that the same letter did for a while make you sorry,
9 | now I am glad; not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you were made sorry according to God, that you might suffer
10 no loss at our hands. For the sorrow that is according to God produces repentance that surely tends to salvation, whereas the sorrow that is according to the world produces death. For behold this very fact that you were made
11 sorry according to God, what earnestness it has wrought

6, 18: Paul mingles 2 Sm 7, 14; Jer 31, 9; Is 43, 6.

7, 6-7: See 2, 14 n.

7, 8-12: See Introduction to the epistle on the lost "tearful letter."

7, 8: See 2, 1-4 n.

7, 10: Compare 1 Pt 2, 19-20.

7, 11: *What indignation:* toward the false teachers. *To avenge:* Paul's offender.

in you, nay, what explanations, what indignation, what fear, what yearning, what zeal, what readiness to avenge! In everything you have showed yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

- 12 If then I did write to you, it was not for the sake of him who did the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered the wrong; but to make clear the zeal we have
 13 for you, | before God. This is why we have been comforted. But besides our own comfort, we more especially rejoiced at the joy of Titus, because his mind had been
 14 set at rest by you all. And if I did boast to him at all about you, I have not been put to shame; but just as we have spoken all things in truth to you, so also has the
 15 boasting we made to Titus been found to be true. And his affection for you is all the more abundant, as he recalls how obedient you all were and how you received
 16 him with fear and trembling. I rejoice that in all things I can have confidence in you.

II. THE COLLECTION FOR THE POOR CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

8

- 1 *Example of the Macedonians* Now we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God that has been bestowed
 2 upon the churches of Macedonia; | where, amid much testing of tribulation, their overflowing joy and their very deep
 3 poverty have resulted in rich generosity. For according to their means—I bear them witness—yes, beyond their
 4 means, they gave, | earnestly begging of us the favor of
 5 sharing in the ministry that is in behalf of the saints. And beyond our expectations they gave themselves, first to the
 6 Lord, and then by the will of God to us. This led us to exhort Titus to complete among you also this same gracious work, of which he had made a beginning before.

- 7 *Exhortation* Now, as you abound in everything—in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all zeal, and in your love for

7, 12: *Who suffered*: Paul or one of his fellow missionaries (see 2, 5-10 n). *The zeal we have for you*: in Greek, "the zeal you have for us."

8, 4: *Saints*: the needy Christians of Jerusalem.

8, 5: The Macedonians dedicated their lives first to Jesus and then their possessions to Paul and his fellow missionaries.

8, 7: *Utterance*: eloquence.

- 8 us—may you excel in this gracious work also. I do not speak as commanding, but as testing the sincerity of your own charity by means of the zeal of others. For you know the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ—how, being rich, he became poor for your sakes, that by his poverty you might become rich.
- 10 In this matter I am giving advice. It is to your interest, since a year ago you not only began to do, but also to have the will. Now therefore complete the doing also; so that your readiness to begin it may be equalled by your desire to carry it through, according to your ability. For if there is willingness, it is welcome according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.
- 15 For I do not mean that the relief of others should become your burden, but that there should be equality; | that at the present time your abundance may supply their want, and that their abundance may, in its turn, make up what you lack, thus establishing an equality, as it is written, 15 "He who had much had nothing over, and he who had little had not less."
- 16 *The Mission of Titus* Now thanks be to God, who has inspired Titus with this same zeal for you. For not only has he accepted our exhortation, but being very zealous himself, he has gone to you of his own choice. And we have sent along with him the brother whose services to the gospel are praised in all the churches; | and what is more, who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in this work of grace which is being done by us, to the glory of the Lord and to show our own readiness. We are on our guard, lest anyone should slander us in the matter of our administration of this generous amount. For we take forethought for what is honorable, not only before God, but also in the sight of men. And we have sent with them also our brother, whom we have proved to be

8, 8: *Others*: the Macedonians.

8, 12: If a person has an earnest desire to give, God accepts what he has to offer.

8, 14: *Your abundance*: of material wealth. *Their abundance*: of spiritual wealth or of material wealth at a latter date.

8, 15: Ex 16, 18 on the manna is accommodated here.

8, 20: Paul entrusted the collection to several representatives of the Christian communities to prevent his critics from accusing him of misappropriating money.

8, 22: *Our brother*: the third representative whom Paul sent to Corinth may have been Tychicus.

zealous often and in many things, but who now is more in earnest than ever, because of his great confidence in you, | whether as regards Titus, who is my companion and fellow-worker among you, or as regards our brethren, the messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. Give them therefore, in the sight of the churches, a proof of your charity and of our boasting on your behalf.

9

1 The Collection to Be Made Promptly For it is indeed superfluous for me to write to you with reference to this charitable service to the saints. For I know your eagerness, whereof I boast about you to the Macedonians—that Achaia has been ready since last year—and your zeal has stimulated very many. Still, I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting concerning you should be found empty in this instance; that, as I was saying, you may be ready, | lest, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say yourselves—should be put to shame for having been so sure. I have therefore thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you in advance and to get ready this promised contribution, so that it may be as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.

6 Exhortation to Generosity Mark this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each one give according as he has determined in his heart, not grudgingly or from compulsion, for "God loves a cheerful giver." And God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that always having ample means, you may abound in every good work, | as it is written, "He has scattered abroad and has given to the poor, his justice remains forever."

Now he who provides the sower with seed will both give you bread to eat and will multiply your seed, and will increase the growth of the fruits of your justice; | that, being enriched in all things, you may contribute with simplicity of purpose, and thus through us evoke thanksgiving to God; | for the administration of this service not only supplies

8, 23: *As regards Titus*: in Greek, "it be Titus." *As regards*: omit.

9, 2: *Achaia*: southern Greece.

9, 7: See Sir 35, 11.

9, 9: See Ps 111, 9.

the want of the saints, but overflows also in much gratitude
 13 to the Lord. The evidence furnished by this service makes
 them glorify God for your obedient profession of Christ's
 gospel and for the sincere generosity of your contributions
 14 to them and to all; | while they themselves, in their prayers
 for you, yearn for you, because of the excellent grace God
 15 has given you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

III. THE APOSTLE DEFENDS HIS APOSTOLATE

10

1 **His Authority** Now I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the
 meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who to your face indeed
 am diffident when among you, but when absent am fearless
 2 towards you! Yes, I beseech you that I may not when I come
 have to be bold, with that assurance wherewith I am thought
 to be bold, against those who regard us as walking accord-
 3 ing to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do
 4 not make war according to the flesh; | for the weapons of
 our warfare are not carnal, but powerful before God to the
 demolishing of strongholds, the destroying of reasoning—
 5 | yes, of every lofty thing that exalts itself against the
 knowledge of God, bringing every mind into captivity to
 6 the obedience of Christ, | and being prepared to take ven-
 geance on all disobedience when once your own submission
 is complete.
 7 Look at what is before you. If anyone is confident that
 he is Christ's, let him reflect within himself that even as he
 8 is Christ's, so too are we. For even if I boast somewhat more
 about our authority (which the Lord has given for your
 upbuilding, and not for your destruction), I shall not be
 9 put to shame. But that I may not seem to terrify you, as it
 10 were, by letters | ("for his letters," they say, "are weighty

9, 15: *Gift*: one opinion states that the apostle thanks God for the gift of Church unity expressed through the collection.

10, 1: *Am diffident*: Paul's critics may have called him a coward who is courageous only when he is absent (see vv. 10-11).

10, 2: Paul states: he can be severe if necessary and he will be severe to those who criticize him as "walking according to the flesh," i.e., as acting in a worldly manner.

10, 3: Although Paul lives in a physical body ("flesh") he does not follow worldly standards ("flesh"). The New Testament writers often depict life as warfare between Christ and his enemies.

10, 4: *Carnal*: worldly.

- and telling, but his bodily appearance is weak and his speech of no account"), | let such people understand that what we are in word by letters when absent, such are we also in deed when bodily present.
- 12 Of course we have not the boldness to class ourselves | to compare ourselves with certain ones who commend themselves. We, on the contrary, measure ourselves by ourselves and compare ourselves with ourselves; | and so we do not boast beyond our limits, but within the limits of the commission which God has given us—limits which include you also. For we are not going beyond our commission, as if we did not embrace you, since we reached even as far as you with the gospel of Christ.
- 15 We do not boast beyond our limits, in the labors of others; but we hope, as your faith increases, greatly to enlarge through you the province allotted to us, | so as even to preach the gospel in places that lie beyond you, instead of boasting in another man's sphere about work already done.
- 17, 18 "But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord." For it is not approved who commends himself, but he whom the Lord commends.

11

- 1 *He Preached Gratuitously* Would to God that you could bear with a little of my foolishness! Nay, do bear with me.
- 2 For I am jealous for you with a divine jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one spouse, that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his guile, so your minds may be corrupted and you fall from a single devotion to Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Christ whom we did not preach, or if you

10, 12: *We, on the contrary . . . with ourselves*: a preferable reading is: "but they, comparing themselves with themselves, are measuring themselves by one another, show no understanding."

10, 13: The apostle says that God ordered him and not the false teachers to preach in many places, including Corinth.

10, 17: Jer 9, 23.

11, 1: *My foolishness*: his vanity of self-approval, about which Paul had to speak to defend himself against his critics.

11, 2: *A divine jealousy*: according to one interpretation, Paul's love for the Corinthians is given to him by God. *Virgin*: the apostle, comparing himself to the father of a virgin, arranges for the marriage of his daughter (the Corinthian community) to Christ.

11, 4: Perhaps the best interpretation is: if the intruding teachers presented a religion that excelled the one taught them by Paul, they would deserve honor.

receive another Spirit whom you have not received, or another gospel which you did not accept, you might well
 5 bear with him. For I regard myself as nowise inferior
 6 to the great apostles. Even though I be rude in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; but in every way we have made ourselves clear to you.

7 Or did I do wrong when I humbled myself that you might be exalted, preaching to you the gospel of God free
 8 of charge? I stripped other churches, taking pay from them
 9 so as to minister to you. And when I was with you and in want, I was a burden to no one; for the brethren from Macedonia supplied my needs. Thus in all things I have kept myself from being a burden to you, and so I intend
 10 to keep myself. By the truth of Christ which is in me, this boast shall not be taken from me in the districts of Achaia. |
 11 Why so? Because I do not love you? God knows I do.
 12 But what I do I will go on doing, that I may deprive them of the occasion who are seeking an occasion to boast that
 13 they are doing the same as we do. For they are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself disguises himself as an
 15 angel of light. It is no great thing, then, if his ministers disguise themselves as ministers of justice. But their end will be according to their works.

16 *His Ministry of Labor and Suffering* I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But if so, then regard me as such, that
 17 I also may boast a little. What I am saying in this confidence of boasting, I am not speaking according to the Lord, but as
 18 it were in foolishness. Since many boast according to the
 19 flesh, I too will boast. For you gladly put up with fools,
 20 because you are wise yourselves! For you suffer it if a man enslaves you, if a man devours you, if a man takes from
 21 you, if a man is arrogant, if a man slaps your face! I speak to my own shame, as though we had been weak. But wherein any man is bold—I am speaking foolishly—I also
 22 am bold. | Are they Hebrews? So am I! Are they Israelites? So am I! Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I! |

11, 5: *Great apostles*: an ironical reference to the false teachers or a sincere reference to the Twelve Apostles.

11, 12: The false teachers accepted a fee for their ministry. They wanted Paul to do likewise, for they would then feel justified.

11, 17: *Not speaking according to the Lord*: the apostle feels that he has sufficient reason for making an exception to Christ's general rule of abstention from boasting.

- 23 Are they ministers of Christ? I—to speak as a fool—more: in many more labors, in prisons more frequently,
 24 lashes above measure, often exposed to death. From 1
 25 Jews five times I received forty lashes less one. Thrice I was scourged, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck,
 26 night and a day I was adrift on the sea; | in journeying often, in perils from floods, in perils from robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,
 27 in perils from false brethren; | in labor and hardships, many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often,
 28 in cold and nakedness. Besides those outer things, there
 29 my daily pressing anxiety, the care of all the churches! What am I weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not inflamed? If I must boast, I will boast of things that concern my weakness.
 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forevermore, knows that I do not lie. In Damascus the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to arrest me; | but I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped their hands.

12

- 1 *His Revelations* If I must boast—it is not indeed expected to do so—but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body

11, 23: *In prisons*: Paul was imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16, 23).
 11, 24: *Five times*: not one instance of Paul's subjection to the Jewish penalty is related in scripture (see 11, 25 n). The oldest mention of this penalty is in Dt 25, 3 ("Forty stripes may be given him, but no more"). Lest this law of Dt be violated, only thirty-nine lashes ("forty lashes less one") were administered.

11, 25: The three scourgings refer to a Roman punishment with the only known example having been at Philippi (Acts 16, 22-23).
Once stoned: in Lystra (Acts 14, 19). *Shipwreck*: see Acts 27, 27. The shipwreck took place after the writing of 2 Cor.

11, 32: See Acts 9, 24-25.

12, 2: *A man*: Paul himself. *Body . . . body*: in ecstasy. Compare Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Part XII. *Third heaven*: the apostle refers to the Jewish notion of heaven: the first heaven of air, the second of stars, and the third of sublimated fire, the highest heaven, the "paradise" (v. 4).

4 or out of the body I do not know, God knows— | that he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words that 5 man may not repeat. Of such a man I will boast; but of my- 6 self I will glory in nothing save in my infirmities. For if I do wish to boast, I shall not be foolish; for I shall be speaking the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should reckon me beyond what he sees in me or hears from me.

7 **His Infirmities** And lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a thorn for the flesh, 8 a messenger of Satan, to buffet me. Concerning this I thrice 9 besought the Lord that it might leave me. And he has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for strength is made perfect in weakness." Gladly therefore I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Wherefore I am satisfied, for Christ's sake, with infirmities, with insults, with hardships, with persecutions, with distresses. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

11 **He Has Been Forced to Boast** I have become foolish! You have forced me. For I ought to have been commended by you, since in no way have I fallen short of the most eminent apostles, even though I am nothing. Indeed, the signs of the apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in 12 miracles and wonders and deeds of power. For in what 13 have you been less favored than the other churches—unless in this, that I was no burden to you? Pardon me this wrong!

14 **His Third Visit** Behold, this is the third time that I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children should not save up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

12, 4: Many moderns interpret this verse to mean a high degree of contemplation.

12, 5: Paul is enraptured by his mystical experience, but lest he feel proud he adds: "I will glory in . . . my infirmities."

12, 6: *Lest . . . from me*: lest any man believe in Paul solely because of these favors that he received.

12, 7: *A thorn for the flesh*: a humiliating, painful illness of a chronic nature. Some conjectures are: epilepsy; eye trouble (Gal 4, 13-14); malaria. *A messenger of Satan*: Paul personifies his illness since it impedes his ministry.

12, 10: *When I am weak*: in the natural order because of defects, "then I am strong" in the supernatural order.

12, 14: *The third time*: see Introduction to the epistle on the sorrowful visit.

- 15 But I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls, even though, loving you more I be loved less.
- 16 But be it so: I was no burden to you, but, being crafty,
- 17 I caught you by guile. Did I take advantage of you through any of these whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and I sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Have we not walked in the same spirit, have we not walked in the same steps?
- 19 Are you thinking all this time that we are defending ourselves before you? We speak before God in Christ; but, for all things, beloved, for your own edification. For I fear lest perhaps when I come I may not find you as I should wish, and lest I may be found by you not as you would wish—lest perhaps there be found among you contentions, envyings, animosities, dissensions, detractions, gossiping, arrogance, and disorders—lest when I come again God should humiliate me before you, and I should mourn over many who sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness and immorality and licentiousness that they practised.

13

- 1 **Warnings** Behold, this is the third time that I am coming to you: "On the word of two or three witnesses every word shall be confirmed." I have already warned, when present, and now in my absence I warn again those who sinned before, and all the rest, that, if I come again, I will not spare.
- 3 Do you seek a proof of the Christ who speaks in me, who is not weak in your regard, nay, is powerful in you? For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he lives through the power of God. Yes, we also are weak in him, yet we shall live with him through the power of God in your regard.
- 5 Put your own selves to test, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Christ

12, 16: *I caught you by guile*: Paul's enemies may have said he might say that he managed to get money from the Corinthians through his legates.

12, 18: *Brother*: see 8, 22 n.

12, 19: *Before God in Christ*: before God as their judge, Paul and his fellow missionaries speak as ministers of Christ.

13, 1-2: *The third time*: see Introduction to the epistle on the sorrowful visit.

13, 1: The apostle will deal legally in accordance with Dt 19, 15.

13, 4: *We also are weak in him*: Paul and his fellow missionaries share in Christ's sufferings. *In your regard*: in dealing with the Corinthians.

- 6 Jesus is in you? unless perhaps you are reprobate! But I hope
7 that you will come to know that we are not reprobate. But
we pray God that you may do no evil at all, not wishing
ourselves to appear approved, but that you may do what is
8 good, and we ourselves pass as reprobate. For we can do
9 nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. And so we
rejoice when we are weak but you are strong. This we also
pray for, your perfecting.
10 Wherefore I write these things while absent, that when
present I may not act more severely, according to the power
that the Lord has given me for upbuilding, and not for
destruction.

CONCLUSION

- 11 **Farewell** In conclusion, brethren, rejoice, be perfected, be
comforted, be of the same mind, be at peace; and the God
12 of peace and love will be with you. Greet one another with
a holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings.
13 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of
God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you
all. Amen.

13, 7: Paul hopes that he will not have to use his authority when he arrives at Corinth.

13, 9: *Perfecting*: correcting the Corinthians.

13, 12: *A holy kiss*: see 1 Cor 16, 20 n.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of scholars, including the most radical, accept the letter to the Galatians as having been written by Paul.

The purpose of writing this autobiographical epistle was to defend his authority as an apostle. Besides, Paul's proclamation of liberty in Chapter 4 has earned for this epistle the title of the Magna Charta of Christian Freedom. More especially, however, the apostle wrote angrily against certain Judaizers who tried to convince the Galatians the contrary to what Paul formerly preached among them, the observance of the Mosaic Law and circumcision were still necessary for salvation. Although it is impossible to say for certain what the outcome was, it may be said that the Galatians most likely remained loyal to Paul. The identity of the Judaizers is not clear but, according to some scholars, they seemingly were Christians who harbored false notions of Christianity. Neither is it clear in what way Paul received information about their activity. It also remains obscure whether the Judaizers were Galatians or whether they came from outside of Galatia.

The most disputed initial question concerns the identity of the "churches of Galatia" (1, 4) and the "Galatians" (3, 1) to whom Paul wrote. The dispute about this problem is customarily opened with a brief background history. Some Celts settled near modern Ankara, Turkey, about 250 B.C. They gradually conquered the southern territories of Pisidia, Lycaonia, Phrygia. The northern (near Ankara) and southern territories formed one Roman province in 25 B.C. The experts are still faced with this question: did Paul write to the Galatians of the northern or southern territories? After a century of disputes, it has become clear that there are solid arguments for both theories. Yet, more scholars favor the north Galatian than the south Galatian theory.

The advocates of the south Galatian theory maintain that Paul wrote to the communities which he founded on his first missionary journey, namely, those of Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13, 13—14, 24). The advocates of the north Galatian theory claim that Paul revisited these cities on his second missionary journey but then passed through "Phrygia and the Galatian country" (Acts 16, 6). Again, according to Acts 18, 23, Paul "travelled through the Galatian country and Phrygia" on his third missionary journey. Regardless which theory is correct the interpretation of the epistle is hardly affected.

Intimately related with the first problem is the question of whether

the recipients of the epistle were converts from paganism or converts from Judaism. It is not easy to detect this from Paul's references to their practices and beliefs.

Time and place of composition are given variantly, depending on the position held as regards the recipients of the letter. The date of composition is one of the most complicated introductory New Testament questions to answer. Many advocates of the south Galatian theory favor the view that Paul wrote the letter from Corinth during his second missionary journey. Many promoters of the north Galatian theory hold that Paul wrote the letter from Ephesus (Acts 19, 1ff) after his second visit to the Galatians (Acts 18, 23). Furthermore, because of the similar contents of the letters to the Galatians and to the Romans, and because the epistle to the Romans shows a calmer atmosphere than that to the Galatians, the latter is said to have been written prior to the former. Hence, the years 56-57 are often given as the date of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Main divisions of the Epistle to the Galatians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-10

Personal Defense

2. A Defense of His Apostolate, 1, 11-24
3. A Defense of His Gospel, 2, 1-21

Doctrinal

4. Justification Comes from Faith Not from the Mosaic Law, 3, 1-29
5. Christians Live in a State of Freedom, 4, 1-31

Moral

6. General Counsels, 5, 1-26
7. Specific Counsels, 6, 1-10
8. Conclusion, 6, 11-18

INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul, an Apostle, sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him
2 from the dead, | and all the brethren who are with me, to
3 the churches of Galatia. Grace and peace be to you from
4 God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, | who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the wickedness of this present world according to the will
5 of our God and Father; | to whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

6 Surprise and Rebuke I marvel that you are so quickly deserting him who called you to the grace of Christ, changing
7 to another gospel; | which is not another gospel, except in this respect that there are some who trouble you, and wish
8 to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema! As we have said before, so now I say again: If
9 anyone preach a gospel to you other than that which you
10 have received, let him be anathema! For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

I. PERSONAL DEFENSE

I. A DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTOLATE

11 Not of Human Origin For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not
12 of man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught
13 it; but I received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism; how beyond all measure I persecuted the Church of God, and

1, 2: *Galatia*: see Introduction to this epistle.

1, 6: *Deserting him*: deserting God the Father.

1, 8: *Anathema*: cursed, excommunicated from the Church.

1, 12: *By a revelation*: see Acts 9, 3-9 on Paul's conversion.

14 ravaged it. And I advanced in Judaism above many of my contemporaries in my nation, showing much more zeal for
 15 the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased him who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his
 16 grace, | to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately, without taking counsel
 17 with flesh and blood, | and without going up to Jerusalem to those who were appointed apostles before me, I retired into Arabia, and again returned to Damascus.
 18 Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the brother of the Lord.
 20 Now in what I am writing to you, behold, before God, I do not lie. Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
 22 And I was unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. But they had heard only that he who formerly persecuted us, now preaches the faith which
 24 once he ravaged. And they glorified God in me.

II. A DEFENSE OF HIS GOSPEL

2

1 *Approved by the Apostles* Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking also
 2 Titus along with me. And I went up in consequence of a revelation, and I conferred with them on the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but separately with the men of authority; lest perhaps I should be running, or had
 3 run in vain. But not even Titus, who was with me, Gentile
 4 though he was, was compelled to be circumcised, | although

1, 14: *The traditions of my fathers*: the Mosaic Law and the body of oral tradition developed by the scribes to explain and apply the Law.

1, 15: God had selected Paul for a supernatural mission after the manner of Jeremiah (Jer 1, 5 n) and the servant of the Lord ("The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb . . ." Is 49, 1).

1, 16: *Flesh and blood*: the same Hebraic idiom for human being is used in Mt 16, 17.

1, 17-18: See Acts 9, 19-22 n.

2, 1-10: Generally, this passage is considered Paul's account of the Jerusalem council of 49-50 narrated in Acts 15, 6-29, despite many differences between the two accounts.

2, 3-4: In spite of the Judaizers ("false brethren") who tried to find weak points in the arguments of Paul and his companions ("spy upon") and who urged that converts from among the pagans be circumcised to be saved, Titus was not circumcised.

2, 4: *Liberty*: from the "slavery" of innumerable prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, such as circumcision (see 4, 31 n).

it was urged on account of false brethren who were brought in secretly, who slipped in to spy upon our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into slavery. Now to these we did not yield in submission, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But from the men of authority (what they once were matters not to me; God accepts not the person of man)—the men of authority laid no further burden on me. On the contrary, when they saw that to me was committed the gospel for the uncircumcised, as to Peter that for the circumcised | (for he who worked in Peter for the apostleship of the circumcised worked also in me among the Gentiles)—and when they recognized the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were considered the pillars, gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised; | provided only that we should be mindful of the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

- 11 *Paul Reproves Peter* But when Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was deserving of blame.
 12 For before certain persons came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and to separate himself, fearing the circumcised.
 13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled along with him, so that Barnabas also was led away by them into that dissimulation.
 14 But when I saw that they were not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: If thou, though a Jew, livest like the Gentiles, and not like the Jews, how is it that thou dost compel the Gentiles to live like the Jews?
 15 We are Jews by birth, and not sinners from among

2, 5: *Not for an hour*: we would say "not for a minute."

2, 11-14: This incident happened after the members of the Council of Jerusalem sent representatives to accompany Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15, 22) with a letter that contained the four prohibitions enjoined upon the Gentiles to ease friction with Jewish converts (see Acts 15, 20 n).

Peter did not observe the Mosaic Law until some Jewish converts arrived at Antioch, and then his shift offended the Gentile converts. Paul reprimanded Peter for his vacillating policy.

2, 15-21: Either Paul actually voiced these reprimands at Antioch in Peter's presence or Paul made them in this letter to counteract the arguments of some Judaizers who preached to the Galatians that they must observe the Mosaic Law for salvation.

16 the Gentiles. But we know that man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Hence we also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law; because by the works of the Law no man will
 17 be justified. But if, while we are seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ
 18 therefore the minister of sin? By no means. | For if I reconstruct the things that I destroyed, I make myself a
 19 sinner. For I through the Law have died to the Law that
 20 I may live to God. With Christ I am nailed to the cross. | It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for
 21 me. | I do not cast away the grace of God. For if justice is by the Law, then Christ died in vain.

II. DOCTRINAL

I. JUSTIFICATION FROM FAITH NOT FROM THE LAW

3

¹ *Proved from the Galatians' Experience* O foolish Galatians! who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus

2, 16: See Rom 3, 20 n on the powerlessness of the Mosaic Law.

2, 17: If nonobservance of the Mosaic Law and seeking justification through faith in Christ beget sin, as the Judaizers claim, then Christ would be the cause of sin. An absurdity!

2, 18: If Paul would observe again ("reconstruct") the Mosaic Law which he already repudiated, he would become a transgressor of the same Mosaic Law because it must no longer be observed. Therefore, to observe it is to transgress it.

2, 19: Through the law of faith in Christ the apostle has died to the Mosaic Law that he may more completely be alive for God. *With Christ I am nailed to the cross*: this sentence is explained in v. 20. Paul and the Christians live with Christ in a real intimate union. By this "concrucifixion" Paul does not mean a subjective crucifixion of the Christian's undesirable affections and tendencies. He means a real, objective, supernatural though mysterious power through which the Christian participates in Christ's death. In this context, the meaning is that the Christian's death to sin and to the Mosaic Law is effected by the concrucifixion with Christ. Concrucifixion with Christ takes place at the reception of baptism.

2, 21: *I do not cast away the grace of God*: by reverting to the practice of the Mosaic Law. The rest of v. 21 synthesizes well Paul's position on the futility of the Mosaic Law, namely: if observing the Mosaic Law were the ordinary means for the Christian to save his soul, then Christ's coming on earth would have been superfluous.

3, 1: Paul labels the Galatians fools for having allowed themselves

2 Christ has been depicted crucified? This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit in virtue of the works
3 of the Law, or in virtue of hearing and believing? Are you so foolish that after beginning in the Spirit, you now
4 make a finish in the flesh? Have you suffered so much in
5 vain? if indeed it be in vain. He therefore who gives the Spirit to you, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the Law, or by the message of faith?
6 Even thus "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as justice."

7 *The Example of Abraham* Know therefore that the men
8 of faith are the real sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, announced to Abraham beforehand, "In thee shall all the
9 nations be blessed." Therefore the men of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 *The Nature of the Law* For those who rely on the works of the Law are under a curse. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not hold to all things that are written in the book of the Law, to perform them."

11 But that by the Law no man is justified before God is evi-

to be deceived by the Judaizers in spite of his preaching to them about Christ crucified.

3, 2: The apostle's rhetorical question reminds the Galatians that they have received the Holy Spirit and his gifts not by observing the Mosaic Law but by believing in Christ.

3, 4: Have the Galatians experienced so many gifts of the Holy Spirit in vain—if indeed they can be experienced in vain?

3, 5: God sends the Holy Spirit and lavishes his gifts and miracles upon the Galatians because of their faith, not because they observe the Mosaic Law.

3, 6: Take Abraham as an example. He was justified by believing in God's promises (see Gn 15, 6).

3, 7: The Jewish followers of the Mosaic Law are not the true descendants of Abraham but the Christians who follow the law of faith in Christ are.

3, 8: *The Scripture*: Paul personifies scripture, meaning: God. The apostle reinterprets the blessing of Gn 12, 3 as a prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles.

3, 10: Paul reinterprets Dt 27, 26 to mean that the Mosaic Law is a malediction because in itself it gives no help to obey it, and a Jew was obliged to obey the Law in its entirety (see Dt 28, 3-68 n).

3, 11: Habacuc (2, 4) told the Jews that by trusting in God they will be spared the Babylonian invasion. Paul, reinterpreting Habacuc, tells the Galatians that by believing in Christ they will be justified (compare Rom 1, 17 n).

12 dent, because "he who is just lives by faith." But the Law does not rest on faith; but, "he who does these things, shall
 13 live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming a curse for us; for it is written, "Cursed is
 14 everyone who hangs on a gibbet"; | that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

15 *The Promise of God* Brethren (I speak after the manner of men); yet even a man's will, once it has been ratified,
 16 no one annuls or alters. The promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. He does not say, "And to his offsprings," as of many; but as of one, "And to thy offspring," who
 17 is Christ. Now I mean this: The Law which was made four hundred and thirty years later does not annul the covenant which was ratified by God, so as to make the
 18 promise void. For if the right to inherit be from the Law, it is no longer from a promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise.

19 *The Purpose of the Law* What then was the Law? It was enacted on account of transgressions, being delivered by angels through a mediator, until the offspring should come

3, 12: The Mosaic Law discounts the value of faith as a motive of obedience. Paul cites Lv 18, 5 to show that the Mosaic Law does not treat of faith but only of the execution of the Law's precepts.

3, 13: According to Dt 21, 23, God curses anyone who hangs on a tree because this penalty presupposes a grave sin against God. Paul says: Christ took this curse upon himself when he hung on the cross to redeem man from the curse of having to obey many commands of the Mosaic Law that provides no help for obeying them. *Redeemed*: see 1 Cor 6, 20 n.

3, 14: *The blessing of Abraham*: see 3, 8 n. *Spirit*: see 3, 2 n.

3, 16: God made promises to Abraham and to his "offspring," literally "seed" (Gn 12, 7). Paul makes much of the seed (in the singular) to interpret it as Christ.

3, 17: The Mosaic Law was given 430 years after God had made the promises to Abraham. The Law, however, did not cancel these promises (according to the Greek of Ex 12, 40). The number of years that had elapsed between Abraham and Moses was disputed in Paul's time as it is now, but this is irrelevant to Paul's argumentation.

3, 18: The right to inherit the promises of the Messiah and his spiritual gifts does not come from the Mosaic Law but from the free promises made to Abraham.

3, 19: *What then was the Law?*: since Paul explained (in the preceding verses) that the Mosaic Law had no direct relation with faith in Christ and with justification, nor with the Messianic promises, it was logical to ask what, then, was the final purpose of the Mosaic Law? *It was enacted on account of transgressions*: what Paul says is:

- 20 to whom the promise was made. Now there is no in
 21 termediary where there is only one; but God is one. Is the
 Law then contrary to the promises of God? By no means
 For if a law had been given that could give life, justice
 22 would truly be from the Law. But the Scripture shut up
 all things under sin, that by the faith of Jesus Christ the
 promise might be given to those who believe.
 23 But before the faith came we were kept imprisoned
 under the Law, shut up for the faith that was to be re
 24 vealed. Therefore the Law has been our tutor unto Christ
 25 that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has
 26 come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all the
 27 children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all you
 who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ

God gave the Mosaic Law to increase sins. What the apostle *means* is: God allowed the Mosaic Law to become an occasion of more sins. Paul does not distinguish between God's causing and God's permitting something to happen. It is characteristic of the inspired writers to attribute everything to God and thereby to omit this distinction so theologically important to moderns.

Paul looked back into history. He saw that the Mosaic Law specified clearly what was a sin and what was not, but in itself the Law did not help to avoid sin (see Rom 7, 10-12 n). Consequently, from the point of view of what actually happened historically, Paul could say that the Law was enacted and sin increased (see Rom 5, 20 n). *Delivered by angels through a mediator*: the apostle argues that the Mosaic Law is inferior to the promise made to Abraham because the Law was given through angels (according to Jewish beliefs, as reflected also in Acts 7, 38 and Heb 2, 2) and through a mediator (Moses), whereas the promise to Abraham was given directly by God (v. 20).

3, 20: There are more than 430 interpretations of this verse (see 3, 19 n).

3, 21-22: The general meaning is: the Mosaic Law is not contrary to the promises made to Abraham because the Law was instituted to lead men to believe in Christ and thereby inherit the promises.

3, 21: *If a law . . . justice would truly be from the Law*: if the observance of the Mosaic Law were a satisfactory way of justifying and sanctifying men, then, Paul implies, there would have been no need of Christ to redeem men.

3, 22: Scripture testifies that all men sinned (see Rom 3, 9-18 n) on account of the Mosaic Law (see 3, 19 n). The powerlessness of the Mosaic Law to save men, due to the Law's lack of help in avoiding sin, led men to believe in Christ through whom the promises made to Abraham came true.

3, 23: Before Christ came on earth, in whom the Christians have faith, they were under the domination of the Mosaic Law while they waited for the new law of faith.

3, 24: Just as the pedagogue in Greco-Roman times led the child to his teacher, so the Mosaic Law led the Jews to Christ (see 3, 22 n).

3, 27: "Putting on Christ" means the same as being crucified with Christ (see 2, 19 n).

- 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are
 29 all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are the offspring of Abraham, heirs according to promise.

II. CHRISTIANS LIVE IN A STATE OF FREEDOM

4

- 1 **Slavery and Freedom** Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the
 2 master of all; | but he is under guardians and stewards
 3 until the time set by his father. So we too, when we were children, were enslaved under the elements of the world.
 4 But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son,
 5 born of a woman, born under the Law, | that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons,
 6 God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying,
 7 "Abba, Father." | So that he is no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.

- 8 **No Return to Slavery** But then indeed, not knowing God,

3, 28: "Putting on Christ" (v. 27) makes Christians so united in Christ that they are all equal, irrespective of nationality, social conditions, or sex. In those days, it was revolutionary to speak of equality among Jews and Greeks, among slaves and freemen. However, it seems that Paul speaks as a theologian here rather than as a social reformer (see Introduction to the Epistle to Philemon).

3, 29: See 3, 7 n.

4, 2: *By his father*: the apostle gives evidence of a point in Roman law that is verified by extrabiblical evidence. According to Roman law, a boy was freed from his guardians and stewards when he reached the age of puberty which was decided by his father not by Roman law.

4, 3: Just as a child does not differ from a slave (v. 1), the Christians were "enslaved under the elements of the world" which, according to one of at least four opinions, means the Mosaic Law (if Jews) or natural law (if Gentiles) before Christ came.

4, 4: The mention of God's pre-existing Son "born of a woman" does not include nor exclude the virginal birth. This is the closest Paul ever came in mentioning the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to the most common interpretation, the apostle is simply saying that Jesus became a member of the human race.

4, 6: *Because you are sons*: from the viewpoint of time, the conferral of divine sonship and the coming of the Holy Spirit are simultaneous; from the viewpoint of causality, the coming of the Holy Spirit is first (it is the cause) and the conferral of divine sonship is second (it is the effect). *Abba*: see Mk 14, 36 n; Rom 8, 15 n.

9 you served those who really are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, which you desire to serve again? You are once again serving days and months and seasons and years. I feel for you, lest perhaps I have labored among you in vain. Become like me, because I also have become like you. Brethren, I beseech you! You have done me no wrong. And you know that on account of a physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you formerly; and though I was a trial to you in my flesh, you did not reject or despise me, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where then is your self-congratulation? For I bear witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your very eyes and given them to me. Have I then become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They court you from no good motive; but they would estrange you, though you may court them. But court the good from a good motive always, and not only when I am present with you. My dear children, with whom I am in labor again, until Christ is formed in you! But I wish I could be with you now, and change my tone, because I do not know what to make of you.

4, 9: *Rather to be known by God*: the conversion of the Galatians was due more to God's love for them than to their love of God. *Weak and beggarly elements*: the Galatians should not return to the former religion since it is too weak to save them spiritually.

4, 10: According to one opinion, Paul is alluding to feasts under the Mosaic Law. Regardless, he interprets these practices as rejection of Christ.

4, 12: See 1 Cor 9, 19-22 n.

4, 13-14: See 2 Cor 12, 7 n.

4, 15: Paul contrasts the satisfaction derived by the Galatians from his preaching among them with their subsiding enthusiasm. *Pluck out your eyes*: a metaphor to express that the Galatians' hospitality was such as to have gladly given him their most prized possessions. The expression does not refer to an infirmity from which Paul suffers (see 2 Cor 12, 7 n).

4, 17: *They court you*: a reference to the false teachers who tried to alienate the Galatians from Paul and the Gospel.

4, 18: *But court the good from a good motive always*: in Greek "it is always good to be eagerly sought after for a good purpose." This verse means: it is laudable for any teacher to be interested in the Galatians, provided that the interest is based on a worthy motive (see 4, 17 n).

4, 20: *I do not know*: Paul is not acquainted with the entire situation.

- 21 *Ismael and Isaac* Tell me, you who desire to be under the
 22 Law, have you not read the Law? For it is written that
 Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave-girl and the other
 23 by a free woman. And the son of the slave-girl was born
 according to the flesh, but the son of the free woman in
 24 virtue of the promise. This is said by way of allegory.
 For these are the two covenants: one indeed from Mount
 Sinai, bringing forth children unto bondage, which is Agar.
 25 For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which corresponds to
 the present Jerusalem, and is in slavery with her children.
 26 But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our
 27 mother. For it is written, "Rejoice thou barren, that dost
 not bear; break forth and cry, thou that dost not travail; for
 many are the children of the desolate, more than of her
 that has a husband."
 28 Now we, brethren, are the children of promise, as Isaac
 29 was. But as then he who was born according to the flesh

4, 21: *Have you not read the Law?*: in Greek, "will you not listen to the Law?"

4, 22-24: The apostle compares the two sons of Abraham with the Old and New Testament covenants. Agar, Abraham's slave-wife begets a slave, Ismael (Gn 16). Agar represents the Old Testament alliance given to Moses on Mount Sinai in Arabia. Just as the children of the slave-wife are born into a life of slavery, so are the children of the Old Testament alliance born into a life of "slavery" under the Mosaic Law (see 4, 31 n).

Sara, Abraham's free-wife, begets a freeman, Isaac (Gn 21, 1-8). Sara represents the New Testament covenant. Just as the children of the free-wife are born into a life of freedom, so are the children of the New Testament born into a life of freedom.

4, 25-26: In contrast with the "slaves" of the earthly Jerusalem who insist on observing the Mosaic Law, there are the freemen of the heavenly Jerusalem who observe Christ's law (see 4, 31 n). Just as Isaac was born in fulfillment of a promise made to Abraham and sterile Sara, so the Gentile converts are "born" of a salvation-promise when they believe that Christ is the divine Messiah.

4, 27: The prophet (see Is 54, 1), in his poetic address to Jerusalem during the sixth century exile of the Jews in Babylonia, exclaims: though Jerusalem seems abandoned by Yahweh, her spouse, and though she resembles a sterile wife, he will come back to enrich her with children who will return from exile to Jerusalem. Then she will bear more offspring than a married woman. Paul reinterprets this prophetic hyperbolic vignette thus: it will be spiritually fulfilled in a future heavenly Jerusalem that will be populated with Christians who have been liberated from the Mosaic Law.

4, 28-30: Just as Ismael maltreated Isaac, so the Judaizers persecute the Christians and Paul. Sara's eviction of Agar and of her slave-son (Gn 21, 9-13) symbolizes that the Christians will emerge as the final victors and will be free.

4, 28: See 3. 7 n.

persecuted him who was born according to the spirit,
 30 also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast o
 the slave-girl and her son, for the son of the slave-g
 31 shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Ther
 fore, brethren, we are not children of a slave-girl, b
 of the free woman—in virtue of the freedom wherewi
 Christ has made us free.

III. MORAL

I. GENERAL COUNSELS

5

1 *Circumcision Now Voidance of Christ* Stand fast, an
 2 do not be caught again under the yoke of slavery. Behold,
 Paul, tell you that if you be circumcised, Christ will be
 3 no advantage to you. And I testify again to every man wh
 has himself circumcised, that he is bound to observe th
 4 whole Law. You who would be justified in the Law an
 estranged from Christ; you have fallen away from grac
 5 For we in the Spirit wait for the hope of justice in virtu
 6 of faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of an
 avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works throug
 charity.

7 *Judgment on Seducers* You were running well; who hind
 8 ered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is no
 9 from him who calls you. A little leaven ferments the whol

4, 31: By freedom from the Mosaic Law and by a newly found freedom through faith in Christ, the apostle means that a Christian no longer obeys predominantly because of the external pressure from a written external law (the Mosaic Law), but obeys because of an unwritten internal and dynamic law of love coming from the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Christian is freed from any law as law, insofar as he acts out of an inner principle of love. When this love begins to lose its influence, the Christian is reminded of his duties by the written law of Christ as explained in the New Testament.

5, 1: *Slavery*: see 4, 1 n.

5, 3: *The whole law*: see 3, 10 n.

5, 5: It is disputed whether Paul means that we are waiting to be justified from sin by faith through the Holy Spirit or through grace

5, 6: *Faith which works through charity*: a key Pauline doctrine (see Jas 2, 24 n).

5, 8: The belief in circumcision and in the observance of the Mosaic Law as a means of salvation is not from God.

5, 9: See 1 Cor 5, 6. The evil influence of the false teachers is apt to cause the complete ruin of the Christian community.

10 **mass.** I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will not think otherwise; but he who disturbs you will bear the penalty, whoever he may be. But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then is the stumbling-block of the cross removed! Would that those who are unsettling you would mutilate themselves!

13 ***How Christians Should Live*** For you have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not use liberty as an occasion for sensuality, but by charity serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed or you will be consumed by one another.

16 But I say: Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are immorality, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, jealousies, anger, quarrels, factions, parties, envies, murders, drunkenness, carousings, and suchlike. And concerning these I warn you, as I have warned you, that they who do such things will not attain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency. Against such things there is no law. And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions

5, 11: If, as the false teachers say, the apostle teaches the necessity of circumcision for salvation, why do these Judaizers persecute him?

5, 12: *Mutilate themselves*: make eunuchs of themselves. Paul may have been induced to utter this caustic remark by the Judaizers' insistence on circumcision. It is also possible that the apostle had in mind the frenzied Galatian priests of Cybele who emasculated themselves in sacrifice to the pagan gods.

5, 13: See 4, 31 n.

5, 14: See Mt 22, 40 n.

5, 15: Fighting one another may lead to the ruin of the Christian community.

5, 16-25: See Rom 8, 5-13 n.

5, 16: *Spirit*: the Holy Spirit.

5, 17: See an expansion of the same idea in Rom 7, 17-21.

5, 18: See 4, 31 n.

5, 19-21: See Rom 1, 28-31 n.

5, 23: *Against such things there is no law*: there is no law to punish a Christian who lives according to the "fruits of the Spirit" (v. 22).

25 and desires. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let
 26 also walk. Let us not become desirous of vainglory, pr
 voking one another, envying one another.

II. SPECIFIC COUNSELS

6

1 **Fraternal Correction** Brethren, even if a person is caught
 doing something wrong, you who are spiritual instruct such
 a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou
 2 also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so you will
 3 fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself
 be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceives himself.
 4 But let everyone test his own work, and so he will have
 glory in himself only, and not in comparison with another.
 5 For each one will bear his own burden.

6 **Good Works** And let him who is instructed in the word
 7 share all good things with his teacher. Be not deceived, God
 8 is not mocked. For what a man sows, that he will also reap.
 For he who sows in the flesh, from the flesh also will
 reap corruption. But he who sows in the spirit, from
 9 the spirit will reap life everlasting. And in doing good,
 let us not grow tired; for in due time we shall reap it.
 10 we do not relax. Therefore, while we have time, let us
 do good to all men, but especially to those who are of
 the household of faith.

CONCLUSION

11 **Summary** See with what large letters I am writing to
 12 you with my own hand! As many as wish to please in the
 flesh compel you to be circumcised simply that they may not
 13 suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even
 they who are circumcised keep the Law; but they desire
 you to be circumcised, that they may make boast of your
 14 flesh. But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save
 in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the

6, 1: *Caught*: by passion or by surprise.

6, 5: *His own burden*: of examining and correcting himself.

6, 6: The Christian should support his teacher.

6, 12: *In the flesh*: in a worldly fashion.

6, 13: *Boast of your flesh*: boast of having persuaded the converts
 to accept circumcision as necessary for salvation.

-
- 15 world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creation is of any account.
- 16 And whoever follow this rule, peace and mercy upon them, even upon the Israel of God.
- 17 Henceforth let no man give me trouble, for I bear the
- 18 marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

6, 15: *A new creation*: the opposite of the "old self" (see Rom 6, 6 n).

6, 16: *This rule*: of a "new creation" (v. 15) of supernatural life. *The Israel of God*: the true Israel or people of God are the Christians and not necessarily those who are physically descended from Abraham.

6, 17: *The marks*: although the Greek word is *stigmata*, the meaning is not that Paul carried the "stigmata" like the mystics, but that he had scars from wounds inflicted by his enemies. These scars were eloquent testimony of his loyalty to Christ.

THE CAPTIVITY EPISTLES

The term "captivity (or: imprisonment) epistles" designates the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon. Paul composed these letters while he was in prison. The specific problem is: was Rome the place of imprisonment? Or Caesarea? Or Ephesus? Most Catholic scholars and some others support the traditional common opinion that Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon were written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome in 61-63 A.D. (Acts 28, 30-31). A rival opinion points to Caesarea in Palestine as the place of writing of these three epistles. Paul spent two and half years in prisons in Jerusalem and Caesarea (58-60 A.D.). Still others hold that Paul wrote these letters from a prison in Ephesus (See Introduction to Philippians for the specific problem of this epistle.)

Except for Philemon, the "captivity epistles" are written in the same style. Their doctrine, too, is so similar that they are sometimes labeled "the Christological epistles." Their emphasis is on Christ, the head of the Church, in his role as the redeemer of man.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION

Hardly any modern scholars support the theory that this letter was written to the Ephesians. Besides textual arguments (see 1, 1 n), one reason is the lack of an indication of its having been exclusively addressed to the Ephesians. Two main substitute theories are: the letter was addressed to "the church of the Laodiceans" (Col 4, 16); the epistle was a circular ("encyclical") to a community of churches in the vicinity of Ephesus in Asia Minor (Turkey). (Opponents of the encyclical theory must not emphasize the lack of evidence for such an example in the ancient world.)

Regardless of the obscurity of the place, there is no obscurity regarding the recipients. They were Gentile Christians, not Jewish Christians (2, 11ff; 3, 1).

The authenticity of the letter cannot be as clearly established. The arguments for the traditional opinion, which ascribes the epistle to Paul, seem more or less balanced by arguments against Pauline authenticity. One telling argument against Paul's authorship is that the letter differs in language and style from his other epistles. A modified opinion on Pauline authenticity maintains that a disciple wrote the epistle according to the ideas given to him by Paul.

The striking and frequent similarities between Ephesians and Colossians in language, style, and doctrine do not solve the problem of authenticity. (These similarities are noted as parallels in the annotations to Ephesians only.) In fact, the similarities accentuate the unsolved puzzle of sequence. Which of the two epistles was written first?

The theological content of Ephesians deals with the Church. "Paul" describes the Church as one, holy, universal, apostolic, visible (4, 1-16). The development of this ecclesiology is perhaps the strongest element that differentiates Ephesians from Colossians. Actually, "Paul's" doctrine on "the Body of Christ" (see: St. Paul and His Epistles, p. 507) reaches its most vivid elucidation in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesians incorporates the doctrine already embodied in the epistle to the Romans (and to a great extent also in the epistle to the Galatians) on justification and salvation for Jews and Gentiles. But the situation is different. In Romans, Paul was preoccupied with Judaizers who insisted on the observance of the Mosaic Law for obtaining salvation; in Ephesians, "Paul" is perturbed by religious syncretism. Yet, his basic doctrine remains unchanged. It teaches that Christ's religion makes men certain of salvation and gives them abundant means of sanctification. Up to that time, neither Judaism nor paganism

could ever satisfy mankind's quest for this certainty and these means. The theological riches in the epistle to the Ephesians has evoked from the scholars such titles as "the crown of Paulinism" and "the swan song of Paul the Theologian."

Main divisions of the Epistle to the Ephesians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-14

Doctrinal

2. The Church Is One with Christ, 1, 15—2, 22
3. Paul's Commission to Preach the Mystery, 3, 1-13
4. A Prayer for His Readers, 3, 14-21

Moral

5. For Christians in General, 4, 1—5, 20
6. The Christian Home, 5, 21—6, 9
7. The Christian Warfare, 6, 10-20
8. Conclusion, 6, 21-24

INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to all the saints who are at Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: | grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 The Eternal Plan of the Father Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing on high in Christ. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish in his sight in love. He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ as his sons, according to the purpose of his will, | unto the praise of the glory of his grace, with which he has favored us in his beloved Son.

7 Realized in the Son In him we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace. This grace has abounded beyond measure in us in all wisdom and prudence, | so that he may make known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure.

1, 1: *Saints*: Christians. *At Ephesus*: since this place name is missing in so many important Greek manuscripts, textual critics conclude that the words "at Ephesus" were not included in the original letter. Only from about 150 A.D. the belief originated that the epistle was written to the Ephesians.

1, 3-14: In the addresses of his epistles, the apostle usually refers to something specific about himself or about his readers. On the impersonal tone of Ephesians see the arguments for and against Pauline authenticity in the Introduction to this epistle.

1, 3: *Blessed be the God . . . who has blessed us*: man blesses God by praising him for his gifts; God blesses man by enriching him with gifts. *Every spiritual blessing*: the spiritual blessings are enumerated in the following verses.

1, 4-5: *He chose us . . . He predestined us*: see Rom 8, 28-30 n.

1, 4: In retrospect, the inspired author reflects: God has from all eternity willed the incarnation of Christ, and the bestowal of divine love on members of Christ.

1, 5: *The purpose*: in Greek, "the good pleasure." This expressive phrase brings out the gratuitousness of God's gift of redemption, a recurring note in the epistle.

1, 6: *The praise of the glory*: the phrase is used in connection with God the Father (vv. 4-6), with the work of the Son (vv. 7-12), and with the operation of the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14). *Grace*: see Lk 1, 28 n.

1, 9: *The mystery*: see 3, 2-13.

- 10 And this his good pleasure he purposed in him | to be dispensed in the fullness of the times: to re-establish all things in Christ, both those in the heavens and those on the earth.
- 11 *Fulfilled through the Holy Spirit* In him I say, in whom we also have been called by a special choice, having been predestined in the purpose of him who works all
- 12 things according to the counsel of his will, | to contribute to the praise of his glory—we who before hoped in Christ.
- 13 And in him you too, when you had heard the word of truth, the good news of your salvation, and believed in it,
- 14 were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, | who is the pledge of our inheritance, for a redemption of possession, for the praise of his glory.

I. DOCTRINAL

I. THE CHURCH IS ONE WITH CHRIST

- 15 *Thanksgiving and Prayer* Wherefore I on my part, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and of your love for

1, 10: *In the fullness of the time*: in the Messianic era, i.e., the time between the first and the second coming of Christ. *To re-establish all things in Christ*: the Greek means: to unite everything harmoniously under Christ, the one authoritative head and goal of both angels and men ("those on earth"). This happy expression, probably original with Paul, is a summary of Col 1, 15-20. *In Christ*: this expression of Christ's mediation between God and men is found more often in Ephesians than in any other epistle.

1, 11-12: *In him*: in Christ. *We also*: the inspired author ranks himself with the Jews of past history who were prepared providentially for the Messiah. The purpose of the conversion of Paul and other Jews was to glorify God (see 1, 6 n).

1, 11: *In the purpose . . . counsel of his will*: God freely chose the Jewish people according to his own plan and will.

1, 13: *You too*: the Gentile Christians. *Sealed*: faith and baptism are alluded to. *Of the promise*: the promise made by the Old Testament prophets of the pre-eminent gift to be given in Messianic times (see Acts 2, 39 n). The words of Ez 36, 27, "I will put *my spirit* within you" were realized in a manner far beyond the prophet's fondest hopes. The gift of the Holy Spirit epitomizes all the divine gifts.

1, 14: The possession of the Holy Spirit and his gifts are in the Christian's lifetime a guarantee and an initial possession till the "redemption of possession," till God makes the Christian definitely his. (This seems to be the best interpretation of the difficult phrase "redemption of possession.") The Christian's total redemption includes his total spiritualization. Another biblical parallel expression is found in 1 Cor 15, 28. *For the praise of his glory*: see 1, 6 n.

16 all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making
 17 mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you the spirit
 18 of wisdom and revelation in deep knowledge of him: | the
 eyes of your mind being enlightened, so that you may
 know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of
 19 the glory of his inheritance in the saints, | and what the
 exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe.
 20 Its measure is the working of his mighty power, | which
 he has wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead,
 21 and setting him at his right hand in heaven | above every
 Principality and Power and Virtue and Domination—in
 short, above every name that is named, not only in this
 22 world, but also in that which is to come. And all things

1, 17: *The Father of glory*: God the Father, as the creator of Christ's human nature, is worthy of all glory. *The spirit of wisdom*: the gift of the knowledge of supernatural truths. *Revelation*: of God's plans for the salvation of man.

1, 18-19: *Eyes of your mind*: a metaphor, also used by Plato and Ovid. *Hope . . . riches . . . power*: Paul prays that God will make the Christians appreciate their divine vocation, their glorious inheritance, and the divine power.

1, 19-20: *Power . . . in raising him from the dead*: one of the characteristic examples in Paul's Epistles of God's power (v. 19). *Setting him at his right hand in heaven*: Christ is superior to the angels (v. 21). For this Semitic expression of Christ's divinity see Acts 2, 33 n.

1, 21: *Principality . . . Power . . . Virtue . . . Domination*: four abstract terms to designate angels. If the first three (in the Greek) are used elsewhere for demons (e.g., Rom 8, 38; 1 Cor 15, 24; Eph 6, 12) the reason is that they (the fallen angels) retained their powers as angels. The sum total of angelic choirs in the Pauline Epistles is seven. The remaining three are the Thrones (Col 1, 16); the angels (Rom 8, 38), and the archangels (1 Thes 4, 15). Judging from Paul's groupings, he did not want to give a complete nor an orderly hierarchical list. All these angelic names were current in contemporary extrabiblical Jewish writings. *Above every name*: Christ is superior to every (created) person ("name"), past, present, and future, on earth and in heaven. "Heaven" includes all the angelic beings not listed by Paul.

1, 22-23: Christ is not only superior in dignity (v. 21) to his Church or body, but also in authority. *Under his feet*: see Ps 8, 7 n. In all tranquillity, the apostle makes the world-shattering statement that the Church is superior to all created beings including the angels because it is Christ's body! In technical theological terms: the Church, in virtue of its head, Christ, is superior since Christ is hypostatically united with the Father.

1, 22: *Church*: the apostle used the word *ekklesia* to refer at first merely to the Christians in the Jerusalem community, then also to those in the local churches and, in the captivity epistles, to all Christians of the universal Church.

he made subject under his feet, and him he gave as head
 23 over all the Church, | which indeed is his body, the completion of him who fills all with all.

2

1 *All Brought into Christ's Life* You also, when you were
 2 dead by reason of your offenses and sins, wherein once you
 walked according to the fashion of this world, according to
 the prince of the power of the air about us, the prince of the
 3 spirit which now works on the unbelievers—indeed, in
 the company of these even we, all of us, once led our
 lives in the desires of our flesh, doing the promptings of
 our flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature chil-
 4 dren of wrath even as the rest. But God, who is rich in
 mercy, by reason of his very great love wherewith he has
 5 loved us | even when we were dead by reason of our sins,
 brought us to life together with Christ (by grace you have
 6 been saved), | and raised us up together, and seated us
 7 together in heaven in Christ Jesus, | that he might show

1, 23: In the triple hierarchy—God, Christ, and the Church—the Church (with all its members) is the fullness (*pleroma*) of Christ (according to the most probable interpretation of "fills all with all"), and Christ is the fullness of God! Christians not only partake of God's fullness in and through Christ, but they also partake of Christ's fullness in and through the Church.

2, 1: *You also*: the Gentile Christians.

2, 2: *The prince of the power of the air*: Satan (compare Jn 12, 31 n). It may mean: the prince who exercises power in the air, or the prince whose kingdom is in the air, or the prince of evil powers. *The prince of the spirit . . . unbelievers*: from Satan comes the spirit of unbelief.

2, 3: *In the company of these even we*: even the Jews were affected by Satan's spirit of unbelief (by disobeying God). For they sinned just like the pagans and became deserving of God's anger ("children of wrath") in spite of their privileged status as the Chosen People (compare Rom 2, 17-24).

2, 5-6: When the Jews and Gentiles were spiritually dead, God brought them back to spiritual life through baptism in union with Christ's death and resurrection. The Christians spiritually resurrect with Christ through a life of grace, and corporally in the person of the head (of the Body), Christ. *Together . . . together . . . together*: the Greek preposition "with" occurs in more than thirty words in which Paul expresses the diverse aspects of the Christians' union with Christ.

2, 6: *Seated us*: the Christians' life of grace on earth is already a germinal partaking of Christ's heavenly exaltation with his Father.

2, 7: God's love is the cause and purpose of everything he does for man. *Christ Jesus*: in Paul's time, the two expressions, Jesus Christ

in the ages to come the overflowing riches of his grace in
 8 kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have
 been saved through faith; and that not from yourselves,
 9 for it is the gift of God; | not as the outcome of works,
 10 lest anyone may boast. For his workmanship we are, created
 in Christ Jesus in good works, which God has made ready
 beforehand that we may walk in them.

11 *Gentile and Jew United* Wherefore, bear in mind that
 once you, the Gentiles in flesh, who are called "uncircumcision"
 by the so-called "circumcision" in flesh made
 12 by human hand—bear in mind that you were at that time
 without Christ, excluded as aliens from the community of
 Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise; having
 13 no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ
 Jesus you, who were once afar off, have been brought near
 14 through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace,
 he it is who has made both one, and has broken down
 the intervening wall of the enclosure, the enmity, in his
 15 flesh. The Law of the commandments expressed in decrees
 he has made void, that of the two he might create in him-
 16 self one new man, and make peace | and reconcile both in
 one body to God by the cross, having slain the enmity in
 17 himself. And coming, he announced the good tidings of
 peace to you who were afar off, and of peace to those

and Christ Jesus were used interchangeably. Nowadays, the former is more commonly used.

2, 10: God gave man nature and grace. He created man to become united with Christ for the purpose of doing good works. Through grace, God prepared the way for the good works that he expects from us.

2, 11: Before the coming of Christ, those who were pagans by birth ("Gentiles in flesh") were derisively called "the uncircumcised" by the circumcised Jews who were circumcised only outwardly ("by human hand") not inwardly (Rom 2, 28f).

2, 12: *No hope*: in a future Messiah. *Without God in the world*: the pagans did not know the true God.

2, 14: The mission of Jesus is to bring peace between Jews and pagans by extending the same spiritual privileges to both. *Intervening wall of the enclosure*: this metaphor stems from the temple courtyard of the Gentiles, beyond which they were forbidden to go (see The Temple of Herod, p. 44). The hostility between Jew and Gentile was to cease through Christ's crucifixion.

2, 15: The innumerable regulations of the Mosaic Law made for hostility between Jew and Gentile in everyday life.

2, 16: *In himself*: in Greek, "in it," the cross.

2, 17: Christ announced his message of peace to pagans and Jews through his incarnation (or through his apostles and missionaries). *Peace to you . . . peace to those*: see Is 57, 19 and Za 9, 10.

18 who were near; | because through him we both have access
 19 in one Spirit to the Father. Therefore, you are now no
 longer strangers and foreigners, but you are citizens with
 20 the saints and members of God's household: | you are built
 upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with
 21 Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner stone. In him the
 whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a
 22 temple holy in the Lord; | in him you too are being built
 together into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

II. PAUL'S COMMISSION TO PREACH THE MYSTERY

3

1 **Paul Instructed** For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of
 2 Christ Jesus for the sake of you, the Gentiles—for I suppose
 you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God that
 3 was given to me in your regard; how that by revelation was
 made known to me the mystery, as I have written above
 4 in brief; | and so by reading you can perceive how well
 5 versed I am in the mystery of Christ, | that mystery which
 in other ages was not known to the sons of men, as now
 it has been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in
 6 the Spirit: | namely, that the Gentiles are joint heirs, and
 fellow-members of the same body, and joint partakers of
 the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

2, 18: *In one spirit*: in one gift, or in the Holy Spirit.

2, 19: *Citizens*: in Greek, "fellow citizens."

2, 20: *Prophets*: of the New Testament times rather than of the Old Testament. *Corner stone*: see Ps 117, 22 n.

2, 21: In Christ are the union, growth and sanctity of his members.

2, 22: The apostle says in this trinitarian verse that his Christian readers are forged, in Christ and through Christ, into the temple of God in the Holy Spirit.

3, 1: This sentence is resumed in v. 14. Such "breaks" are characteristic of the apostle's style.

3, 2: *The dispensation of the grace*: the missionary charge, conferred through grace, of preaching to the Gentiles.

3, 3: *By revelation*: Paul alludes to his conversion on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9, 39 n). *The mystery*: see v. 6. *As I have written above*: a reference to 1, 9-10 or to 2, 11-22 rather than to a lost letter.

3, 5: See par Col 1, 26. *Sons of men*: an Hebraic expression for "men." *Prophets*: of New Testament times, as in 2, 20. In v. 3 Paul mentions himself alone as the recipient of this mystery. In v. 5 he includes Christ's "holy apostles and prophets." *Spirit*: the Holy Spirit.

3, 6: See 2, 11-22 for the elaboration on this mystery. The union between Jew and Gentile is emphasized even more in the three Greek words, which in the translation here are given as "joint-heirs,"

⁷ *Assigned to Preach to the Gentiles* Of that gospel I was made a minister by the gift of God's grace, which was given
⁸ to me in accordance with the working of his power. Yes, to me, the very least of all saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the Gentiles the good tidings of the
⁹ unfathomable riches of Christ, | and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things;
¹⁰ | in order that through the Church there be made known to the Principalities and the Powers in the heavens the manifold wisdom of God | according to the eternal purpose
¹² which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him we have assurance and confident access through faith in
¹³ him. Therefore I pray you not to be disheartened at my tribulations for you, for they are your glory.

III. A PRAYER FOR HIS READERS

¹⁴ For this reason I bend my knees to the Father of our
¹⁵ Lord Jesus Christ, | from whom all fatherhood in heaven and
¹⁶ on earth receives its name, | that he may grant you from his glorious riches to be strengthened with power through his
¹⁷ Spirit unto the progress of the inner man; | and to have Christ dwelling through faith in your hearts: so that, being

"fellow-members," and "joint partakers" (see 2, 5-6 n). *The promise:* the Holy Spirit (see 1, 13 n).

3, 7: See par Col 1, 25.

3, 8: *Saints:* Christians. *Unfathomable riches of Christ:* see Col 2, 2 n.

3, 10: The Church represents the apex of God's wisdom and action in the world. The angels (see 1, 21 n) marvel at the life and action of the Church, and through it they acquire a deeper insight into God's wisdom.

3, 11: God's eternal plan of the Church is realized in Christ. *The eternal purpose:* literally, "the purpose of the ages," all the periods of human history.

3, 13: Paul's sufferings should be a source of encouragement.

3, 14: This verse continues v. 1. *I bend my knees:* the solemnity of the apostle's prayer is highlighted by kneeling since standing was the ordinary Jewish posture for prayer. *Of our Lord Jesus Christ:* not in the Greek.

3, 15: *From whom all fatherhood . . . receives its name:* "fatherhood" means "family" in Greek. "Receives its name" is an Hebraic expression for "derives its nature." Just as a family comes from a father, so every family, society, angelic group, and human group come from God, their Creator-Father.

3, 16: Paul prays that the gifts of the Holy Spirit may strengthen the spiritual faculties of his Christians to do good.

- 18 rooted and grounded in love, | you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length
 19 and height and depth, | and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, in order that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- 20 Now, to him who is able to accomplish all things in measure far beyond what we ask or conceive, in keeping
 21 with the power that is at work in us—to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus down through all the ages of time without end. Amen.

II. MORAL

I. FOR CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL

4

- 1 *Unity in the Mystical Body* I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called, | with all humility and meekness
 2 with patience, bearing with one another in love, | careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
 4 one body and one Spirit, even as you were called in on
 5 hope of your calling; | one Lord, one faith, one Baptism
 6 | one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through out all, and in us all.

- 7 *Diversity of Graces* But to each one of us grace was given

3, 18: The measurements express limitless grandeur. Here are only three of the various interpretations of what Paul is contemplating the Church; the mystery (3, 2-13); love of Christ (v. 19).

3, 19: May the Christian readers realize that the love of Christ "surpasses all knowledge" that they may be filled with the fullness (*pleroma*) of God's perfections, i.e., with an unending reception of grace and supernatural gifts on earth, and glorious eternal happiness in heaven.

3, 20-21: May the Church and Christ give glory forever to God who, by the omnipotent power that is working within Christians, is able to do far more than they can ever possibly imagine to ask.

4, 3: The Christian members must preserve the harmony worked by the Holy Spirit, and thereby cultivate the fruit of peace.

4, 4: *One body and one Spirit*: the glorious body of Christ with all Christians as its members, united by "the Holy Spirit of the promise" (1, 13). *One hope*: of reaching heaven.

4, 6: *Throughout all*: God's Providence permeates the world. *In us all*: through grace (see 2, 22; Rom 8, 11).

4, 7: Spiritual gifts ("grace") were given according to the need for the common good of the Christian community, as explained in vv. 11-12.

8 according to the measure of Christ's bestowal. Thus it says, "Ascending on high, he led away captives; he gave gifts to men."

9 Now this, "he ascended," what does it mean but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?
 10 He who descended, he it is who ascended also above all
 11 the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he himself gave some men as apostles, and some as prophets, others again as evangelists, and others as pastors and teachers,
 12 | in order to perfect the saints for a work of ministry, for
 13 building up the body of Christ, | until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the mature measure
 14 of the fullness of Christ. And this he has done that we may be now no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine devised in the wickedness of men, in craftiness, according to the wiles
 15 of error. Rather are we to practise the truth in love, and so grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ.
 16 For from him the whole body (being closely joined and knit together through every joint of the system according to the functioning in due measure of each single part) derives its increase to the building up of itself in love.

17 *Change of Self* This, therefore, I say and testify in the Lord, that henceforward you are not to walk as the Gentiles
 18 walk in the futility of their mind, | having their understanding clouded in darkness, estranged from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blind-

4, 8: See Ps 67, 19 n.

4, 9-10: The meaning of Christ's symbolic cosmic flight is that he is the ruler and lord of all creation (see 1, 20-23).

4, 9: *Lower parts of the earth*: either place of the dead (compare Rom 10, 6-8 n), or the earth.

4, 13: Just as a human body develops to maturity, so will Christ's body develop to full membership, "the fullness of Christ" (see 1, 23 n). This interpretation is preferable to that which understands here the growth of the individual Christian.

4, 14: *And this he has done*: omit.

4, 15: *Practise the truth in love*: the Christian must not only believe but also love—by living his faith.

4, 16: The growth of Christ's body (the Church) through love is due to its head (Christ). The perfection of each member lies in his contribution to the whole body (see Col 2, 19 n).

4, 18: *Blindness of their heart*: a hardening of the will against doing good.

19 ness of their heart. For they have given themselves up
 despair to sensuality, greedily practising every kind of un-
 20.21 cleanness. But you have not so learned Christ—for surely
 you have heard of him and have been taught in him (as
 22 truth is in Jesus) | that as regards your former manner of
 life you are to put off the old man, which is being corrupted
 23 through its deceptive lusts. But be renewed in the spirit
 24 of your mind, | and put on the new man, which has been
 created according to God in justice and holiness of truth.

25 *Vices to Be Avoided* Wherefore, put away lying and
 speak truth each one with his neighbor, because we are
 26 members of one another. "Be angry and do not sin": do
 27 not let the sun go down upon your anger: | do not give place
 28 to the devil. He who was wont to steal, let him steal no
 longer; but rather let him labor, working with his hands
 at what is good, that he may have something to share with
 29 him who suffers need. Let no ill speech proceed from your
 mouth, but whatever is good for supplying what fits the
 30 current necessity, that it may give grace to the hearers. And
 do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were
 31 sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and
 wrath, and indignation, and clamor, and reviling, be re-
 32 moved from you, along with all malice. On the contrary
 be kind to one another, and merciful, generously forgiving
 one another, as also God in Christ has generously for-
 given you.

4, 19: *In despair*: the Greek meaning is: without moral sensi-
 bility to the evil of sin.

4, 22: *Put off the old man*: human nature dominated by sin (see
 Col 3, 9).

4, 23: *The spirit of your mind*: "spirit" here does not mean the
 Holy Spirit, nor grace; it means the disposition to act upon grace
 received.

4, 24: *The new man*: human nature dominated by the Holy Spirit
 at baptism is alluded to as a creation, for it is only God's omnipotent
 power that can effect this work.

4, 26: The quotation according to the Greek of Ps 4, 5 is a Se-
 mitic expression for: even if you are justified in being angry, do not
 sin by excess or in any other way. According to another interpretation
 v. 26 means: if you are angry, expel your anger quickly. *Do not let
 the sun . . . anger*: a metaphorical way of saying: forgive quickly.

4, 29: *Whatever is good for supplying what fits the current neces-
 sity*: a suggested translation is: whatever is good and helpful that
 befits the occasion.

4, 30: *The day of redemption*: the last day.

4, 31: See par Col 3, 8.

4, 32: See par Col 3, 12-13.

5

1 Be you, therefore, imitators of God, as very dear chil-
 2 dren | and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and de-
 livered himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to
 God to ascend in fragrant odor.

3 But immorality and every uncleanness or covetousness,
 let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints;
 4 | or obscenity or foolish talk or scurrility, which are out of
 5 place; but rather thanksgiving. For know this and under-
 stand, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous
 one (for that is idolatry) has any inheritance in the king-
 6 dom of Christ and God. Let no one lead you astray with
 empty words; for because of these things the wrath of
 7 God comes upon the children of disobedience. Do not,
 8 then, become partakers with them. For you were once dark-
 ness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk, then, as
 9 children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all good-
 10 ness and justice and truth), testing what is well pleasing
 11 to God; | and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works
 12 of darkness, but rather expose them. For of the things
 that are done by them in secret it is shameful even to speak;
 13 | but all the things that are exposed are made manifest by
 14 the light: for all that is made manifest is light. Thus it says,
 "Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ
 will enlighten thee."

15 See to it therefore, brethren, that you walk with care: not
 16 as unwise | but as wise, making the most of your time,
 17 because the days are evil. Therefore do not become foolish,
 18 but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not
 be drunk with wine, for in that is debauchery; but be filled
 19 with the Spirit, | speaking to one another in psalms and

5, 1: *Imitators of God*: see Mt 5, 48 n.

5, 2: *Loved us*: in Greek, "loved you." *Fragrant odor*: compare
 Ex 29, 18 and Ps 39, 7.

5, 3: See par Col 3, 5.

5, 4: See par Col 3, 8.

5, 5: Compare 1 Cor 6, 9-10.

5, 6: *The wrath of God*: see Rom 1, 18 n.

5, 8: *Darkness . . . light*: see Jn 8, 12 n.

5, 14: It is commonly thought that these words came from an
 ancient Christian hymn.

5, 15: See par Col 4, 5.

5, 19-20: See par Col 3, 16-17.

5, 19: Pliny reports in his *Letters*, X. 96, written 112 A.D. in
 Pontus (in present-day eastern Turkey) that the Christians would
 convene on an appointed day before daybreak to sing an antiphonal
 chant to Christ as to a god.

hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody :
 20 your hearts to the Lord, | giving thanks always for a
 things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the
 Father.

II. THE CHRISTIAN HOME

21 *The Wife and the Husband* Be subject to one another |
 22 the fear of Christ. Let wives be subject to their husbands
 23 as to the Lord; | because a husband is head of the wife, just
 as Christ is head of the Church, being himself savior of
 24 the body. But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so
 also let wives be to their husbands in all things.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the
 26 Church, and delivered himself up for her, | that he might
 sanctify her, cleansing her in the bath of water by means
 27 of the word; | in order that he might present to himself the
 Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any
 such thing, but that she might be holy and without blemish.
 28 Even thus ought husbands also to love their wives as their
 29 own bodies. He who loves his own wife, loves himself. For
 no one ever hated his own flesh; on the contrary he nourishes
 30 and cherishes it, as Christ also does the Church (because
 we are members of his body, made from his flesh and from
 his bones).

31 "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother
 and cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh."
 32 This is a great mystery—I mean in reference to Christ

5, 22: See par Col 3, 18.

5, 23: See 1 Cor 11, 3 n.

5, 24: The "subjection" of wives meant here is one of love and
 vv. 25-33 show.

5, 25: See par Col 3, 19. *Delivered himself*: just as Christ laid
 down his life for the Church, so must the husband lay down his life
 for his wife if necessary (Chrysostom).

5, 26-27: An allusion to the religious Greek rite whereby the bride
 was bathed and adorned before she was presented to the bridegroom.
 Here, Christ himself bathes the Church in baptism, accompanied with
 the sacramental formula, and presents her to himself as a bride—
 beautiful in sanctity (2 Cor 11, 2).

5, 27: *The word*: this may mean the profession of faith of the
 candidate.

5, 30: See 1 Cor 6, 15. *Made from his flesh and from his bones*
 not in the Greek.

5, 31: See Gn 2, 24.

5, 32: "Mystery" is here often understood not in the sense of ob-
 scurity but of importance. The "mystery" itself refers to the union

33 and to the Church. However, let each one of you also love his wife just as he loves himself; and let the wife respect her husband.

6

1 *Children and Parents* Children, obey your parents in the
2 Lord, for that is right. "Honor thy father and thy mother"—
3 such is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may
be well with thee, and that thou mayest be long-lived upon
the earth."

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,
but rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

5 *Slaves and Masters* Slaves, obey your masters according to
the flesh, with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your
6 heart, as you would Christ: | not serving to the eye as
pleasers of men, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of
7 God from your heart, | giving your service with good will
8 as to the Lord and not to men, | in the knowledge that what-
ever good each does, the same he will receive back from the
Lord, whether he is slave or freeman.

9 And you, masters, do the same towards them, and give up
threatening, knowing that their Lord who is also your Lord
is in heaven, and that with him there is no respect of per-
sons.

III. THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

10 *The Armor of God* For the rest, brethren, be strengthened
in the Lord and in the might of his power. Put on the armor
11 of God, | that you may be able to stand against the wiles of
12 the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood,

of husband and wife, long hidden in God's plan as a type or model
(now made known) of the union between Christ and his Church.
Compare the mystery of the conversion of the Gentiles (see 3, 6 n).
Most scholars do not believe that this verse speaks of marriage as a
sacrament, except by way of insinuation as the Council of Trent says.
6, 2-3: See Ex 20, 12. Paul reinterprets the reward of a long life
on earth for honoring father and mother as the reward of heaven.

6, 4: See par Col 3, 21.

6, 5-8: On Paul's attitude toward slavery see the Introduction to
Philemon.

6, 5: *Masters according to the flesh*: earthly masters.

6, 12: *Flesh and blood*: weak men. *Principalities . . . Powers*
. . . world-rulers: evil angels (see 1, 21 n). "World" in the expres-

but against the Principalities and the Powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high. Therefore take up the armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of justice, and having your feet shod with the readiness of the gospel of peace, in all things taking up the shield of faith, with which you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, that is, the word of God.

18 *Assiduous Prayer* With all prayer and supplication pray all times in the Spirit, and therein be vigilant in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for us that when I open my mouth, utterance may be granted unto me fearlessly to make known the mystery of the gospel, in which I am an ambassador in chains; so that therein I may dare to speak as I ought.

CONCLUSION

21 But that you too may know my circumstances and what I am doing, Tychicus, our dearest brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will tell you everything. Him I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may learn our circumstances, and that he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who have a love unfailing for our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

sion "world-rulers" is taken in the moral sense of religious ignorance and sin ("darkness"). *Spiritual forces of wickedness*: the will of demons is bent on leading men into sin. *On high*: see 2, 2 n f. "the prince of the power of the air."

6, 13-17: *Armor . . . breastplate . . . shield . . . helmet . . . sword*: the apostle visualizes a Roman soldier.

6, 13: *In the evil day*: of temptation. *Stand in all things perfect*: he who has done everything will be victorious.

6, 15: *Readiness of the gospel of peace*: to be equipped with the gospel of peace.

6, 17: *The word of God*: not the Gospel but the word that God gives us to say at critical times (Mt 10, 19f.).

6, 21-22: See par Col 4, 7-8.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

Philippi, founded in the fourth century B.C., was named after Philip II, king of Macedonia (359-336 B.C.). The city is most famous for the battle in 42 B.C. in which Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus. The city then became a Roman colony, inhabited by many Roman veterans who joined the native Greeks (see 3, 20 n). At the time of Paul's writing, the converts were chiefly Gentile Christians (Acts 16, 12-40). About one-half of the population descended from Roman settlers. Excavations reveal that the religions practiced at Philippi originated in Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and Rome.

Paul founded the church at Philippi in 50-51 A.D. during his second missionary journey. Some time afterward, the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to take money to the imprisoned apostle. The messenger returned to Philippi with a letter from Paul. The city where he was imprisoned and from where he wrote the letter is disputed. Was it Caesarea? Or Rome? Ephesus? The arguments in favor of Caesarea are weak. Some of the arguments for the opinion that Paul wrote from Rome during his imprisonment there (61-63 A.D.) have long rested on Phil 1, 13 and 4, 22. In Phil 1, 13, the apostle writes that he is in chains in the praetorium (Governor's palace). This was inferred to mean the Praetorian Guard on the Palatine hill in Rome. Phil 4, 22 speaks of special greetings sent by "Caesar's household." This expression was long interpreted as a definite indication of Rome as the place of this epistle's composition.

Those who favor the Ephesus theory state that there was also a "praetorium" at Ephesus and a "Caesar's household" of imperial slaves and freedmen, too. In other words, these two expressions were found to apply not only to Rome but to other cities of the Roman empire as well. The Ephesus theory tends to date the epistle from 56-57 A.D. The choice between Rome and Ephesus must still be made. No definite solution is in sight.

There is wider agreement on Paul's authorship of this epistle—because of its vocabulary and style, familiar from the apostle's writings—than on its unity. A probable theory is that the letter comprises a series of notes sent by Paul to Philippi on several different occasions.

Besides the striking passage on Christ's divinity (2, 5-11) much of the epistle deals with false teachers and various personalities (see 3, 18-19 n). Apart from the letter to Philemon, the epistle to the Philippians is the most personal of Paul's letters.

Main divisions of the Epistle to the Philippians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-11
2. Personal News, 1, 12-26
3. Exhortation, 1, 27—2, 18
4. Timothy and Epaphroditus, 2, 19-30
5. Warnings against False Teachers, 3, 1—4, 1
6. Conclusion, 4, 2-23

INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the
2 bishops and deacons: | grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Thanksgiving and Prayer I give thanks to my God in all
4 my remembrance of you, always in all my prayers making
5 supplications for you all with joy, | because of your association with me in spreading the gospel of Christ from the first
6 day until now. I am convinced of this, that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection until
7 the day of Christ Jesus. And I have the right to feel so about you all, because I have you in my heart, all of you, alike in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, as sharers in my joy. For God is my witness how I long
9 for you all in the heart of Christ Jesus. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and all
10 discernment | so that you may approve the better things, that you may be upright and without offense unto the day of
11 Christ, | filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

1, 1: *Timothy*: see Acts 16, 1-3. *Saints*: Christians. *Bishops*: priests acting as overseers of local communities (see 1 Tm 3, 1 n). *Deacons*: see Acts 6, 6 n.

1, 5: *The gospel*: not the written Gospels, but the preaching of Christ's message (see 4, 15-18).

1, 6: *The day of Christ Jesus*: the second coming at the end of the world.

1, 7: *Sharers in my joy*: in Greek, "sharers of my grace" of the divine favor (in Paul's view) of imprisonment.

1, 8: *The heart of Christ Jesus*: in Paul, the love of Christ reaches out to the Philippians. In other words, he loves them because of the ardent love in the heart of Christ for the men whom he redeemed. Other forceful texts for the biblical foundation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart are: Gal 2, 20 ([Christ] who loved me); Eph 3, 8 ("the unfathomable riches of Christ"); Eph 3, 19 ("Christ's love"); Eph 5, 2 ("as Christ loved us").

1, 9: *Knowledge and all discernment*: theoretical and practical knowledge about God and things divine.

1, 10: *Approve the better things*: this means: approve the best among good things; the expression does *not* mean; approve right from wrong.

1, 11: *Glory . . . of God*: the last end of all man's deeds.

I. PERSONAL VIEWS

12 *Propagation of the Gospel* Now I wish you to know, brethren, that my experiences have turned out rather for the
13 advancement of the gospel, | so that the chains I bear for the sake of Christ have become manifest as such throughout
14 the praetorium and in all other places. And the greater number of the brethren in the Lord, gaining courage from my chains, have dared to speak the word of God more freely
15 and without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even out of envy and contentiousness, but some also out of good will.
16 Some proclaim Christ out of love since they know I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; | but some out of contentiousness, not sincerely, thinking to stir up affliction for
17 me in my chains. | But what of it? Provided only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being
18 proclaimed; in this I rejoice, yes and I shall rejoice. For I know that this will turn out for my salvation, thanks to your prayer and the assistance of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, |
19 in accord with my eager longing and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but that with complete assurance now as at all times Christ will be glorified in my body, whether through life or through death.

21 *Sentiments of St. Paul* For to me to live is Christ and to die

1, 12: Paul's imprisonment helped to advance the spread of the Gospel.

1, 13: *The chains . . . have become manifest*: people perceived that Paul was not imprisoned for anything evil, but for his preaching about Christ. *Praetorium*: see Introduction to this epistle.

1, 14: Most Christians in the city where the apostle was imprisoned were motivated to preach more because of his imprisonment.

1, 15: Some Christians, unfriendly to Paul, preached against him.

1, 17: The apostle's adversaries hope that by their successful preaching they will diminish his reputation and embitter him in prison.

1, 18: *Rejoice*: joy is a recurring theme in this epistle.

1, 19: *The Spirit of Jesus Christ*: the Holy Spirit (see Acts 16, 7 n).

1, 20: *Life or . . . death*: Paul will glorify Christ in his body throughout life by dedicating all his energies to Christ. In death, the apostle will glorify Christ through martyrdom that will testify to a life of service.

1, 21: *To me to live is Christ*: all Paul's activity, joys and aspirations in life are centered in Christ. This phrase and Gal 2, 20 probably form the apostle's most succinct and penetrating expression of his union with Christ (see Gal 2, 19 n). *To die is gain*: because the

22 is gain. But if to live in the flesh is my lot, this means for me
 23 fruitful labor, and I do not know which to choose. Indeed I
 am hard pressed from both sides—desiring to depart and to
 24 be with Christ, a lot by far the better; | yet to stay on in
 25 the flesh is necessary for your sake. And with this conviction
 I know that I shall stay on and continue with you all for
 26 your progress and joy in the faith, | that your rejoicing in
 my regard may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming
 to you again.

II. EXHORTATION

27 **Firmness** Only let your lives be worthy of the gospel of
 Christ; so that, whether I come and see you, or remain ab-
 sent, I may hear about you, that you are steadfast in one
 spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the
 28 gospel. Do not be terrified in any way by the adversaries;
 for this is to them a reason for destruction, but to you for
 29 salvation, and that from God. For you have been given the
 favor on Christ's behalf—not only to believe in him but
 30 also to suffer for him, | while engaged in the same struggle
 in which you have seen me and now have heard of me.

2

1 **Unity and Humility** If, therefore, there is any comfort in
 Christ, any encouragement from charity, any fellowship in
 2 the Spirit, any feelings of mercy, | fill up my joy by thinking
 alike, having the same charity, with one soul and one mind.
 3 Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of vainglory, but in
 4 humility let each one regard the others as his superiors, | each
 one looking not to his own interests but to those of others.

"gain" is the possession of Christ in heaven. This verse is the fruit
 of a mystical life with Christ.

1, 28: The steadfastness of the Christians is a sign to the oppon-
 ents that they are preparing a punishment for themselves at the final
 judgment and that the Christians are assured of salvation.

1, 29: Compare Acts 5, 41.

1, 30: *Struggle*: the Greek word for struggle is generally used for
 athletic competitions.

2, 1-2: After Paul pleads for unity against the adversaries (1,
 27-30), he pleads earnestly for unity among the Philippians them-
 selves. A paraphrase may be: if a plea in the name of Jesus can
 motivate you, if you derive any encouragement from the love of
 Christ, if you are united with me in our common life with the Holy
 Spirit, if you have any mercy in your hearts (v. 1), then cease your
 petty jealous quarrels and unite (v. 2).

5 Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, |
 6 who though he was by nature God, did not consider being
 7 equal to God a thing to be clung to, | but emptied himself,
 taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men.
 8 And appearing in the form of man, | he humbled himself,
 9 becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. There-
 fore God also has exalted him and has bestowed upon him
 10 the name that is above every name, | so that at the name
 of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth
 11 and under the earth, | and every tongue should confess that
 the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

12 *Fear and Joy in Serving* Wherefore, my beloved, obedi-
 ent as you have always been, not as in my presence only,

2, 6-11: Because of the solemnity of the language and the original strophic divisions of the verses it is generally conceded that this passage is an ancient liturgical hymn not composed by Paul but only inserted here by him. The vocabulary is not Pauline. Besides, the apostle usually contrasts Christ's death and resurrection; here the contrast is between Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

In this hymn, the apostle exhorts the Philippians to follow the example of the humble Christ. But the example is not taken from humble acts of Christ, but from the humble state of human nature that Christ assumed.

2, 6: *He was by nature God*: literally, "he was in the form of God." Christ's divine nature is meant here. *A thing to be clung to*: literally, a "prey" (to be clung to). Christ did not insist on being treated with all the external privileges befitting his eternally divine dignity.

2, 7: *Emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave*: Christ deprived himself of the external recognition of his divinity (not of his divine nature) by accepting the form of a servant (not slave in the social sense of the world). *Appearing in the form of man*: he acted like a true man (not only giving the external appearance of a man but also having a true human nature). This phrase is in apposition with "being made like unto men."

2, 9: This is an Hebraic way of saying that Christ was divine. "The name that is above every name" is "Lord" (v. 11), or *kurios*, the Greek equivalent of Yahweh. God did not make Jesus divine since he is eternally divine. Paul means that God made Jesus known to all mankind as divine through and after the resurrection and ascension. *Above every name*: above every person. Perhaps the allusion is especially to the angels (see Eph 1, 21 n).

2, 10: See Is 45, 23: "To me every knee shall bend." *In heaven, on earth and under the earth*: see Eph 4, 9-10 n.

2, 11: *The Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory . . . the Father*: in Greek, "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Acknowledging the divinity of Jesus redounds to the glory of the Father.

2, 12: Obedience to Paul's advice is most probably meant here. *With fear and trembling*: in the Old Testament (Dt 2, 25), this

but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation
 13 with fear and trembling. For it is God who of his good
 14 pleasure works in you both the will and the performance. Do
 15 all things without murmuring and without questioning, | so
 as to be blameless and guileless, children of God without
 blemish in the midst of a depraved and perverse generation.
 16 For among these you shine like stars in the world, | holding
 fast the word of life to my glory against the day of Christ;
 because not in vain have I run, neither in vain have I la-
 17 bored. But even if I am made the libation for the sacrifice
 18 and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you. And
 in the same way do you also joy and rejoice with me.

III. TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS

19 *Timothy* Now I hope in the Lord Jesus shortly to send
 Timothy to you, that I also may be of good cheer when I
 20 know your circumstances. For I have no one so like-minded
 21 who is so genuinely solicitous for you. For they all seek their
 22 own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. | But know his
 worth: as child serves father, so he has served with me in
 23 spreading the gospel. I hope then to send him to you as
 24 soon as I see how things stand with me. But I trust in the
 Lord that I myself also shall come to you shortly.

25 *Epaphroditus* But I have thought it necessary to send to
 you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-
 soldier, but for you a messenger and the minister to my need.
 26 For he was longing for all of you and was grieved because
 27 you had heard that he was sick. Yes, he was sick, almost
 unto death. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only
 but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.
 28 Therefore I send him the more speedily, in order that seeing
 him again you may rejoice and that I may be free from

expression meant the fear and tremble that befell the enemies of the Israelites; in the New Testament, the expression often means an awareness of the working of God in and through the Christian (see 1 Cor 2, 3-4).

2, 13: The mystery of man's freedom lies in the manner of God's collaboration with man in willing and performing acts.

2, 16: If the Philippians make their actions proclaim the message that brings spiritual life to others, Paul will be proud of them when Christ returns at the end of the world.

2, 17: A picturesque description of the Philippians as priests who offer their faith on the altar, making Paul's lifeblood the libation needed to complete the sacrifice.

29 sorrow. Welcome him, then, with all joy in the Lord and
 30 show honor to men like him, | because for the work of
 Christ he drew near to death, risking his life to supply what
 was lacking for your service to me.

IV. WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS.

3

1 *The Christian Spirit* For the rest, my brethren, rejoice in
 the Lord. To write you the same things indeed is not irksome
 2 to me, but it is necessary for you. Beware of the dogs, be-
 3 ware of the evil workers, beware of the mutilation. For we
 are the circumcision, we who serve God in spirit, who glory
 in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh—
 4 though I too might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone
 else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, yet more
 5 may I: | circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Israel,
 of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as regards
 6 the Law, a Pharisee; | as regards zeal, a persecutor of the
 Church of God; as regards the justice of the Law, leading
 a blameless life.

7 *Renunciation for the Sake of Christ* But the things that
 were gain to me, these, for the sake of Christ, I have
 8 counted loss. Nay more, I count everything loss because
 of the excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord. For
 his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I count
 9 them as dung that I may gain Christ | and be found in him,
 not having a justice of my own, which is from the Law,
 but that which is from faith in Christ, the justice from God

2, 30: *What was lacking*: Epaphroditus, the messenger sent by the
 Christian Philippians, was more than a compensation for the insuffi-
 cient contributions in money which they sent to Paul.

3, 1: *Necessary*: better, "salutary." Paul does not mind repeating
 a warning (vv. 2ff) that will be salutary to them.

3, 2-3: Rather than the Judaizing Christians, who insisted on the
 observance of the Mosaic Law for salvation, the Jewish trouble-
 makers are meant by "dogs" and "evil workers." *Dogs*: Paul applies
 to some Jews the epithet that they used when referring to the pagans.
Mutilation: the apostle mocks the proud title ("the circumcised") of
 the people of circumcision.

3, 3: The Christians are the true spiritual Jews. *Confidence in the
 flesh*: pride in human qualities and achievements.

3, 6: *Church of God*: "of God" not in the Greek.

3, 9: See Rom 3, 21-22.

10 based upon faith; | so that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings: be-
 11 come like to him in death, | in the hope that somehow I
 12 may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this, or already have been made perfect, but I press on hoping that I may lay hold of that for which
 13 Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it already. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is
 14 before, | I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us then, as many as are perfect, be of this mind; and if in any point you are minded otherwise, this also God will
 16 reveal to you. Still in what we have attained¹ let us be of the same mind, and let us also continue in this same rule.

17 *Followers and Opponents of the Cross* Brethren, be imitators of me, and mark those who walk after the pattern
 18 you have in us. For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies
 19 of the cross of Christ. Their end is ruin, their god is the

3, 10-11: *I may know him*: Paul wants to know Christ through a sharing in the mysteries of the resurrection, the sufferings of Christ during his life, passion, and death. *The power of his resurrection*: not the power that resurrected Christ, but all that was effected by Christ's resurrection, namely: a manifestation of his divinity; the establishment of Christ in the glory of the Father in heaven; a spiritual resurrection from a life of sin on earth; and, especially, a physical resurrection of the just at the end of the world (v. 11).

3, 12: *Not that . . . already . . . perfect*: the apostle says that he has not yet attained the ideal sanctity expected of a Christian at the time of the final resurrection. *But I press on . . . Jesus has laid hold of me*: Paul wants to possess Jesus with all the force of love with which Jesus himself seized the apostle (at his conversion on the road to Damascus).

3, 14: *To the prize . . . Jesus*: to gain the reward held out by the call, i.e., the love of Christ.

3, 15: Paul urges the spiritually mature to follow his advice, and he hopes that God will help anyone who thinks differently to see the light.

3, 16: The apostle exhorts the Philippians to continue to observe the spiritual truths and practices that they have accepted. *Let us be of the same mind*: not in the Greek.

3, 18-19: *Enemies of the cross of Christ*: most scholars identify the "enemies" with the same false teachers as explained in 3, 2-3 n. One minority view sees these enemies as apostate Christians.

3, 19: *Their god is the belly*: not a reference to their grosser appetites, but to the Old Testament distinction between clean and unclean foods.

belly, their glory is in their shame, they mind the things
 20 earth. But our citizenship is in heaven from which also
 21 eagerly await a Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, | who
 refashion the body of our lowliness, conforming it to
 body of his glory by exerting the power by which he is
 also to subject all things to himself.

4

1 So then, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my
 and my crown, stand fast thus in the Lord, beloved.

CONCLUSION

2 **Concord** I entreat Evodia and I exhort Syntyche to be
 3 one mind in the Lord. And I beseech thee also, my lo
 comrade, help them, for they have toiled with me in
 gospel, as have Clement and the rest of my fellow-work
 whose names are in the book of life.

4 **Peace and Joy in the Lord** Rejoice in the Lord alway
 5 again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known to
 6 men. The Lord is near. | Have no anxiety, but in eve
 prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitio
 7 be made known to God. And may the peace of God whi

3, 20: *Our citizenship*: literally, "commonwealth." This may
 an allusion to the *jus italicum* that granted to the Philippians the sa
 privileges as to the inhabitants of Italy. Some implications are: baptis
 makes Christians citizens of heaven; the Head, Jesus, dwells
 heaven; the spiritual goods of heaven belong to all Christians; a
 good acts merit the reward of heaven.

3, 21: Compare 1 Cor 15, 22-28.

4, 2-3: Paul asks a "loyal comrade," unidentified, to reconcile th
 two rival women.

4, 3: *Clement*: since this name was a favorite in the early centurie
 it is incorrect to identify this Clement as Pope St. Clement of Rome.
 There is no indication that St. Clement came from Philippi. *Book o
 life*: a list of those who had a claim to eternal life. In the cities o
 antiquity a registrar kept a list of citizens. Compare Ps 68, 29 n.

4, 5: *Moderation*: the untranslatable Greek word, which means
 willingness to waive one's rights, can perhaps be best rendered
 "forbearance." *The Lord is near*: this may mean that the help of t
 Lord is at hand (see Ps 144, 88).

4, 6: *Have no anxiety*: about the necessities of life. *In eve
 prayer*: in Greek, "in everything by prayer . . ."

4, 7: *The peace of God*: the peace that man cannot attain alon
 nor can he estimate its true worth. May this peace "guard you
 hearts" by anchoring them in joy and security. May peace guard you
 minds by expelling anxieties and affirming the true faith.

surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- 8 For the rest, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything
9 worthy of praise, think upon these things. And what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, these things practise. And the God of peace will be with you.
- 10 *Their Gift* I have rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your concern for me has revived. Indeed you were always concerned, but lacked opportunity.
- 11 Not that I speak because I was in want. For I have learned to be self-sufficing in whatever circumstances I am.
- 12 I know how to live humbly and I know how to live in abundance (I have been schooled to every place and every condition), to be filled and to be hungry, to have abundance and to suffer want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Still, you have done well by sharing in my
13 affliction. But, Philippians, you yourselves also know that in the first days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church went into partnership with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you only.
- 16 For even in Thessalonica, you sent once and twice something for my need. Not that I am eager for the gift, but I
17 am eager for the profit accumulating to your account. | I have all and more than enough. I am fully supplied now that I have received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a sweet odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.
19 But may my God supply your every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory for endless ages. Amen.
- 21,22 *Farewell* Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren with me here greet you. All the saints greet you, especially
23 those of Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

4, 13: Paul says: it is because of Christ that he can live independently of the vicissitudes of human life.

4, 16: When the apostle went from Philippi to Thessalonica, the Philippians came to his aid since he was destitute. Acts narrates nothing of this situation.

4, 19: It is through Christ that the Christians receive all their spiritual gifts.

4, 22: *Caesar's household*: see Introduction to this epistle.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

Colossae, in southwestern present-day Turkey, was one of the three main Christian cities in the Lycus district. The other two, Laodicea and Hierapolis, were connected with Colossae by economic ties. Under the Romans, Colossae was a textile center.

Epaphras was probably the founder of the church at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col 1, 7; 4, 12ff). According to Col 2, 1 it was not Paul who founded the church there. The members of the Colossian community were mostly Gentile Christians (2, 13); it is possible that there was also a small group of Jewish Christians.

From Col 1, 8ff it is deduced that Epaphras reported the condition of the church to Paul, whereupon the apostle wrote his epistle against the false teachers to the Colossians. Tychicus delivered Paul's letter (Col 4, 7).

The common view is that Paul is the author of this letter, but there is one objection based on the unaccustomed vocabulary and style. The letter contains thirty-four words that are not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Yet both, vocabulary and style, can be easily explained by the fact that the apostle is engaged in a polemic against new adversaries. The doctrine about Christ developed in this epistle is reason for another objection to Paul's authorship. However, it can be easily shown that this development follows the same pattern as in 1, 2 Cor.

The false doctrines disseminated at Colossae are generally recognized to contain Jewish and Gnostic elements. There are many details, though, of these errors that remain disputed among scholars. Some Jewish elements are the regulations about cleanliness (2, 21), about food and drink, the Sabbath, and the new moon (2, 16). Unlike the Judaizers against whom Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians, the false teachers at Colossae did not impose the observance of the Mosaic Law.

Among the Gnostic doctrinal elements is that of the angels who supposedly created the world (see 1, 19 n) and who govern the destiny of men. Paul stresses the pre-existence, superiority and mediatorship of Christ, qualities that the false teachers implicitly denied (1, 15-20; 2, 9-15).

It is on the occasion of answering these false teachers that the apostle sketches a brilliant canvas of Christ's superiority over the hierarchy of angelic beings in the cosmos. The absorbing preoccupation with this aspect of Christology differentiates this epistle from the other captivity epistles to the Ephesians and the Philippians.

For the time and place of composition see: The Captivity Epistles, p. 634.

Main divisions of the Epistle to the Colossians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-14
2. The Pre-eminence of Christ, 1, 15—2, 3
3. Warnings against False Teachers, 2, 4—3, 4
4. The Ideal Christian Life in the World, 3, 5—4, 6
5. Conclusion, 4, 7-18

INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will
 2 God, and our brother Timothy, | to the brethren in Coloss:
 holy and faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you and pe
 from God our Father.

3 Thanksgiving We give thanks to the God and Father
 4 our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, | for we ha
 heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that y
 5 bear towards all the saints | because of the hope that is li
 up for you in heaven. Of that hope you have heard
 6 the word of the gospel truth | which has reached you, ev
 as it is in the whole world, both bearing fruit and gro
 ing; just as it does among you since the day that you hea
 7 and recognized the grace of God in truth. Thus you learn
 from our most dear fellow-servant Epaphras. He is a fait
 8 ful minister of Christ Jesus in your behalf; | and it was
 who made known to us your love in the Spirit.

9 Prayer for Their Progress This is why we too have be
 praying for you unceasingly, since the day we heard th
 and asking that you may be filled with knowledge of h
 10 will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. May yo
 walk worthily of God and please him in all things, bearin
 fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledg
 11 of God. May you be completely strengthened through h
 glorious power unto perfect patience and long-suffering
 12 joyfully | rendering thanks to the Father, who has made u

1, 1: *Timothy*: see Acts 16, 1ff on his life.

1, 4-5: *Faith . . . love . . . hope*: compare 1 Cor 13.

1, 4: *Saints*: the Greek word, often translated Christians, denote more the idea of commitment rather than holiness.

1, 5: *Hope*: of eternal happiness. *Gospel truth*: a popular expression in English.

1, 6: *In the whole world*: a hyperbole.

1, 7: *Epaphras*: see Introduction to this epistle.

1, 8: *In the Spirit*: it may mean "in the Holy Spirit," or simply "in spirit," as in 2, 5 "in spirit I am with you."

1, 9: *We too*: not only Epaphras (v. 7). *We heard this*: about their conversion.

1, 11: *Glorious power*: see 1, 27 n.

1, 12: *In light*: the meaning may be: to share the lot of the dear who are in God's presence.

- 13 worthy to share the lot of the saints in light. He has rescued
us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the
14 kingdom of his beloved Son, | in whom we have our re-
demption, the remission of our sins.

I. THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST

- 15 **God, Creator, Head** He is the image of the invisible God,
16 the firstborn of every creature. For in him were created all
things in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and
things invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Prin-
cipalities, or Powers. All things have been created through
17 and unto him, | and he is before all creatures, and in him
18 all things hold together. Again, he is the head of his body,
the Church; he, who is the beginning, the firstborn from
the dead, that in all things he may have the first place.
19 For it has pleased God the Father that in him all his full-
20 ness should dwell, and that through him he should recon-

1, 13: *Power of darkness*: the realm of sin and of the devil.

1, 14: *Redemption, the remission of our sins*: see Eph 1, 7.

1, 15-20: Paul shows the superiority of Christ in the natural order of creation (vv. 15-17) and in the supernatural order of man's redemption (vv. 18-20). There may here be a polemic against the teachers at Colossae who denied the superiority of Christ. This passage is similar to the *Logos* in Jn 1, 1-18. See Eph 1, 10 n.

1, 15: Christ resembles God by an equality of nature (see 2 Cor 4, 4). Paul seems to be writing about Christ in his divine nature before he became man. St. John, however, writes of Jesus, after he became man, as the image of God insofar as God is made visible to the world through his Son: "He who sees me sees also the Father" (Jn 14, 9). *The firstborn of every creature*: Paul means that Christ existed before any creature was made.

1, 16: The pre-existent Christ is the mediator in creation (Rom 11, 36). For the dependence on the Old Testament "wisdom" see Jn 1, 14 n. *Thrones . . . Powers*: Christ is superior to all types of angels. See Eph 1, 21 n.

1, 17: *He is before all creatures*: Christ is superior in dignity to all creatures. *Hold together*: not only were all beings created through Christ but they are also kept in existence through him.

1, 18: *Head of his body*: see 1 Cor 12, 12-30 n. *The firstborn*: Christ was the first to arise to a new life, and he was the cause of the resurrection of all the members of his body, the Church. Compare "firstborn" in 1, 15 n.

1, 19: *His fullness*: since Father and Son are equal in nature (see 1, 15 n), all God's power and love dwell in the Son. Paul may be alluding to the erroneous doctrinal teaching about the need of angelic mediators, not recognizing that there is but one mediator, Christ.

1, 20: *Through him*: through Christ. *In the heavens*: scholars ask: how can Christ reconcile to himself the good angels, for whom there is no need of reconciliation, and the fallen angels, for whom

cile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross:

- 21 **Conciliator** You yourselves were at one time estranged
 22 and enemies in mind through your evil works. But now he
 has reconciled you in his body of flesh through his death, to
 present you holy and undefiled and irreproachable before
 23 him. Only you must remain firmly founded in the faith
 and steadfast and not withdrawing from the hope of the
 gospel which you have heard. It has been preached to every
 creature under heaven; and of it I, Paul, have become
 a minister.
- 24 **Center of Preaching** I rejoice now in the sufferings I bear
 for your sake; and what is lacking of the sufferings of
 Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body, which is the
 25 Church; | whose minister I have become in virtue of the
 office that God has given me in your regard. For I am to
 26 preach the word of God fully—the mystery which has been
 hidden for ages and generations, but now is clearly shown to
 27 his saints. To them God willed to make known how rich in
 glory is this mystery among the Gentiles—Christ in you
 28 your hope of glory! Him we preach, admonishing every
 man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may
 29 present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. At this, too, I
 work and strive, according to the power which he mightily
 exerts in me.

no reconciliation is possible? There is no satisfactory answer. One partial answer is: the fallen angels will be reconciled to God by submission to their condemnation at the final judgment (2, 15; 1 Cor 15, 24).

1, 22: *Body of flesh*: Christ's mortal, not mystical, body is meant here. *Holy and undefiled and irreproachable*: these words were used for sacrificial victims in the Old Testament. Compare 1 Cor 6, 11.

1, 23: *Hope*: of eternal happiness. *Every creature*: a hyperbole.

1, 24: *For your sake*: compare Eph 3, 13. *What is lacking of the sufferings of Christ*: Paul does not mean that Christ's suffering was deficient in redemptive value. It is disputed whether the "sufferings of Christ" are those endured by Jesus or those borne by the members of Christ's (mystical) body. According to the first opinion, the apostle means that he merits the fruit of the Passion for souls through his union of suffering with Christ. According to the second opinion, the sufferings of Christ are continued in the members of his (mystical) body. Paul is one such member.

1, 26: *The mystery*: see Eph 3, 6 n.

1, 27: *Christ in you*: Paul summarizes the "mystery." *Your hope of glory*: Christ is the guarantor of eternal happiness.

2

- ¹ For I wish you to know what great concern I have for you and for the Laodiceans and for all who have not seen me
² in the flesh; | that their hearts may be comforted, and they themselves well equipped in charity and in all the riches of complete understanding, so as to know the mystery of God
³ the Father of Christ Jesus, | in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

II. WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

- ⁴ *A General Admonition* Now I say this so that no one may
⁵ deceive you by persuasive words. For though I am absent in body, yet in spirit I am with you, rejoicing at the sight of your orderly array and the steadfastness of your faith in
⁶ Christ. Therefore, as you have received Jesus Christ our
⁷ Lord, so walk in him; | be rooted in him and built up on him, and strengthened in the faith, as you also have learnt, rendering thanks abundantly.
- ⁸ *Speculative Errors* See to it that no one deceives you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to human traditions, according to the elements of the world and not according to
⁹ Christ. For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead
¹⁰ bodily, and in him who is the head of every Principality
¹¹ and Power you have received of that fullness. In him, too,

2, 1: *Laodiceans*: the inhabitants of Laodicea, the neighboring city of Colossae.

2, 2: *Mystery*: the mystery is Jesus who is difficult to comprehend completely ("the unfathomable riches of Christ," Eph 3, 8).

2, 3: *Wisdom and knowledge*: these two words are difficult to distinguish. They seem to mean contemplative and practical knowledge.

2, 5: *In spirit*: see 1, 8 n.

2, 8: *By philosophy*: by what the false teachers call philosophy. *Elements of the world*: one opinion is: do not be deceived by teachers who propose rudimentary worldly-wise notions. Paul ironically belittles what is presented as profound knowledge. Compare Gal 4, 3 n. See the Jewish-Gnostic teachings in the Introduction to this epistle.

2, 9: *Fullness of the Godhead*: see 1, 19. *Bodily*: essentially. Paul seems to attack the false teachers who probably claimed that Jesus possesses only some of God's perfections.

2, 10: *Principality and Power*: Christ is superior to angels (see 1, 16 n).

2, 11: The converts have been justified by faith in Christ, not by circumcision.

- you have been circumcised with a circumcision not wrought by hand, but through putting off the body of the flesh, a
- 12 circumcision which is of Christ. For you were buried together with him in Baptism, and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from
- 13 the dead. And you, when you were dead by reason of your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought to
- 14 life along with him, forgiving you all your sins, | cancelling the decree against us, which was hostile to us. Indeed, he
- 15 has taken it completely away, nailing it to the cross. Disarming the Principalities and Powers, he displayed them openly, leading them away in triumph by force of it.
- 16 **Erroneous Practices** Let no one, then, call you to account for what you eat or drink or in regard to a festival or a
- 17 new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of things to
- 18 come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you who takes pleasure in self-abasement and worship of the angels, and enters vainly into what he has not seen,
- 19 puffed up by his mere human mind. Such a one is not united to the head, from whom the whole body, supplied and built up by joints and ligaments, attains a growth that is of God.
- 20 If you have died with Christ to the elements of the world, why, as if still living in the world, do you lay down

2, 12: See Rom 6, 3 n.

2, 13: *The uncircumcision of your flesh*: this is an odd expression in connection with the Gentiles. Nevertheless, the metaphor refers to the time prior to their conversion.

2, 14-15: Christ, by his crucifixion, cancelled man's debt ("decree") to God.

2, 15: The hostile demons ("Principalities and Powers") were conquered by Christ's redemption.

2, 16-18: These verses refer to false Jewish teachings, especially v. 16. (See Introduction to this epistle.) *Let no one cheat you*: let no one disqualify you as true Christians because you refuse to practice the worship of angels. *And enters vainly into what he has not seen*: according to many scholars, the general meaning is that the false teachers boast of visions.

2, 19: Paul emphasizes here the union of the members with the head, whereas in Eph 4, 16 the apostle underscored the unity of members among themselves.

2, 20: *The elements of the world*: see 2, 8 n. V. 20 calls to mind: "We needs must love the highest when we see it" (Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, "Guinevere," I. 652).

- 21.22 the rules: "Do not touch; nor taste; nor handle!"— | things that must all perish in their very use? In this you follow
 23 "the precepts and doctrines of men," | which, to be sure, have a show of wisdom in superstition and self-abasement and hard treatment of the body, but are not to be held in esteem, and lead to the full gratification of the flesh.

3

- 1 *Mystical Death and Resurrection* Therefore, if you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where
 2 Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Mind the things
 3 that are above, not the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 4 When Christ, your life, shall appear, then you too will appear with him in glory.

III. THE IDEAL CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE WORLD

- 5 *Renounce Vices* Therefore mortify your members, which are on earth: immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire and
 6 covetousness (which is a form of idol-worship). Because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the unbelievers, |
 7 and you yourselves once walked in them when they were
 8 your life. But now do you also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, abusive language and foul-mouthed utterances.
 9 Do not lie to one another. Strip off the old man with his

2, 21: This regulation about cleanliness may be indicative of a Jewish false teaching (see Introduction to this epistle).

2, 22: "*The precepts and doctrines of men*": by this quotation (Is 29, 13) the apostle tells the converts that these prohibitions have not come from the Mosaic Law but from the false teachers of Colossae. See Mt 15, 8-9 n for a different use of Isaiah's words.

2, 23: The prohibitions (see v. 21), said to promote strict devotion, self-abasement, and rigorous discipline, only appear wise, for they do not restrain sensuality.

3, 1: Since baptism ends the life dominated by sin (2, 12), the Christians must seek their ideals from God and not from the false teachers (2, 20-23).

3, 3: *You have died*: to sin through baptism.

3, 4: *Christ, your life*: this phrase has been pointed out as Paul's most daring formula to express intimate union with Christ. *Shall appear*: at the end of the world. Compare Phil 1, 21 n.

3, 5: This means: put to death earthly things: immorality, etc.

3, 6: *The wrath of God*: see Rom 1, 18 n.

3, 9: *Old man*: human nature ruled by sin.

- 10 deeds | and put on the new, one that is being renewed unto perfect knowledge according to the image of his Creator.
 11 Here there is not Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and freeman; but Christ is all things and in all.

- 12 **Practise Virtues** Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility,
 13 meekness, patience. Bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against any other; even as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you forgive.
 14 But above all these things have charity, which is the bond
 15 of perfection. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts; unto that peace, indeed, you were called in one
 16 body. Show yourselves thankful. | Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom teach and admonish one another by psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing in your hearts to God by his grace. Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- 18 **The Christian Family** Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is becoming in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives
 19 and do not be bitter towards them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for that is pleasing in the Lord.
 21 | Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, that they may not be discouraged.

- 22 **Slaves and Masters** Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service seeking to please
 23 men, but in singleness of heart from fear of the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it from the heart as for the Lord and
 24 not for men, | knowing that from the Lord you will receive
 25 the inheritance as your reward. Serve the Lord Christ. For he who does a wrong will reap the wrong he did, and there is no respect of persons.

3, 10: *Put on the new*: see Eph 4, 24 n. *Renewed*: the Christian is morally renewed in knowledge according to God's image (Gn 1, 26).

3, 11: There is no distinction of race, religion, culture (including the most barbarous culture ["Scythian"]), and society in the Christians' union with Christ. Compare Gal 3, 28.

3, 18-21: See Eph 5, 21-6, 4.

3, 22-4, 1: See Eph 6, 5-9.

4

¹ Masters, give your slaves what is just and fair, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

² *Prayer and Prudence* Be assiduous in prayer, being wakeful therein with thanksgiving. At the same time pray for us also, that God may give us an opportunity for the word, to announce the mystery of Christ (for which also I am in chains), | that I may openly announce it as I ought to speak. ³ Walk in wisdom as regards outsiders, making the most of your time. Let your speech, while always attractive, be seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

CONCLUSION

⁷ *Tychicus and Onesimus* All my circumstances Tychicus, our dearest brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord, will tell you. Him I have sent to you for this very purpose, that he may learn your circumstances and comfort your hearts. With him is Onesimus, our most dear and faithful brother, who is one of you. They will tell you all that is going on here.

¹⁰ *From Paul's Co-workers* Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, sends you greetings; so does Mark, Barnabas' cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), | and Jesus who is called Justus. Of men circumcised, these only are my fellow-workers in the kingdom of God; they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, sends you greetings—a servant of Christ Jesus, who is ever solicitous for you in his prayers, that you may remain perfect and completely in accord with all the will of God. Yes, I bear him witness that he labors much for you and for those who are at Laodicea and

4, 5: The Christians are to try to make converts.

4, 6: *Seasoned with salt*: see Mt 5, 13 n.

4, 7: *Tychicus*: he most probably delivered this letter to the Colossians.

4, 9: *Onesimus*: see Introduction of the epistle to Philemon.

4, 10: *Aristarchus*: a Macedonian Jew from Thessalonica. He accompanied Paul from Ephesus to Jerusalem and Rome. *Mark*: the evangelist.

4, 11: *Justus*: otherwise unknown.

4, 12: *Epaphras*: see Introduction to this epistle.

14 at Hierapolis. Luke, our most dear physician, and Demas send you greetings.

15 *A Message for the Laodiceans* Greetings to the brethren who are at Laodicea and to Nymphas and the church that
16 is in his house. And when this letter has been read among you, see that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also; and that you yourselves read the letter from Laodicea.
17 And say to Archippus: "Look to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."

18 I, Paul, greet you by my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

4, 14: *Luke*: the evangelist. *Physician*: see discussion in Introduction to Luke's Gospel. *Demas*: the same name is mentioned in 2 Tm 4, 9.

4, 15: *Nymphas*: the Laodicean who made his home available for religious services, just as Philemon did in Colossae.

4, 16: Some scholars believe that the letter mentioned here is the canonical letter to the Ephesians. (See Introduction to the epistle to the Ephesians).

4, 17: *Archippus*: he perhaps substituted as head of the Colossian church in the absence of Epaphras (see Phlm 1, 2).

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS INTRODUCTION

When Paul entered the seaport of Thessalonica (modern Salonica), it was about 350 years old. The city, founded about 300 B.C., received its name from a sister of Alexander the Great. Situated on the Via Egnatia, the imperial highway that connected Rome with her provinces in the east, Thessalonica became a flourishing commercial center of the Roman province of Macedonia and its capital where the pro-consul resided. From about 42 B.C., when it became a free city, it was ruled by five or six "politarchs" (see Acts 17, 6 n).

Small wonder that Paul chose this bustling, strategically situated seaport for his mission to spread the good news all over Greece (1 Thes 1, 7). Thessalonica was chiefly inhabited by Greeks, but many other nationalities were commercially attracted to this typically licentious and idolatrous port city. The Jews were numerous and important enough to possess a synagogue.

The apostle, with Silas and Timothy, founded the Church of Thessalonica during his second missionary journey in 50-51 A.D. As usual, he converted more Gentiles than Jews. According to Acts, it seems that Paul remained in Thessalonica about five weeks; to judge from 1 and 2 Thes, however, he seemed to have stayed there about three months. The rioting Jews caused the apostle to leave the city (Acts 17, 1-9).

Paul and his companions continued their travels to Berea and Athens. The apostle sent Timothy back from Athens to Thessalonica (1 Thes 2, 18-3, 5); he himself went to Corinth. After Timothy had reported to Paul at Corinth of the Thessalonians' loyalty to the faith (1 Thes 3, 6), the apostle wrote his first surviving epistle (1 Thes) about 52 A.D.

Hardly any serious scholar doubts nowadays Paul's authorship of 1 Thes. The apostle's purpose in writing this letter was to encourage the Thessalonians and to answer a few queries. Because there are no great theological doctrines in 1 and 2 Thes, these epistles have been called "the Cinderellas" of Paul's letters.

Main divisions of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-10

Paul's Past Relations and Present Interest

2. Paul's Mission, 2, 1-12
3. Paul's Thanksgiving, 2, 13-20
4. Timothy's Mission, 3, 1-13
5. Exhortation to Chastity and Charity, 4, 1-12
6. The Second Coming of Our Lord, 4, 13-5, 11
7. Conclusion, 5, 12-28

INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: grace be to you and peace.

2 Thanksgiving for Their Faith We give thanks to God always for you all, continually making a remembrance of you in our prayers; | being mindful before God our Father of your work of faith, and labor, and charity, and your enduring hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We know, brethren, beloved of God, how you were **4** chosen. For our gospel was not delivered to you in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much fullness, as indeed you know what manner of men we **5** have been among you for your sakes. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in **6** great tribulation, with joy of the Holy Spirit, | so that you became a pattern to all the believers in Macedonia and in **7** Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has been spread abroad, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we **8** need say nothing further. For they themselves report concerning us how we entered among you, and how you turned **9** to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, | and to await from heaven Jesus, his Son, whom he raised from the dead, who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

1, 1: *Silvanus*: or Silas, mentioned in Acts 15, 22. He and Timothy were Paul's companions during the apostle's second missionary journey. They may have helped in founding the Church in Thessalonica.

1, 5: *In power . . . in the Holy Spirit*: there are different interpretations of these two expressions: miracles; and charismatic gifts. Both expressions may simply mean divine power as in 1 Cor 2, 4. *In much fullness*: better, "with strong conviction."

1, 6: *Tribulations*: see Acts 17, 1-9.

1, 9: Other people spoke of the success of Paul and his companions among the Thessalonians before they themselves were able to do so.

1, 10: A potent incentive to the early Christians to live their religion was the belief that the second coming of Christ was near. See Ti 2, 13. *Who has delivered*: in Greek, "who delivers." *Wrath to come*: the punishment to be meted out at the end of the world.

I. PAUL'S PAST RELATIONS AND PRESENT INTEREST

2

- ¹ *His Mission among Them* For you yourselves, brethren,
² know that our coming among you was not in vain. But
 although we had previously experienced suffering and shame-
 ful treatment at Philippi, as you know, we had confidence in
 our God to preach to you the gospel of God amid much
³ anxiety. For our exhortation was not from error, nor from
⁴ impure motives, nor from guile. But as approved by God to be
 entrusted with the gospel, so we speak not as pleasing
⁵ men, but God, who proves our hearts. For at no time have
 we used words of flattery, as you know, nor any pretext
⁶ for avarice, God is witness, | nor have we sought glory
⁷ from men, neither from you nor from others. Although
 as the apostles of Christ we could have claimed a position
 of honor among you, still while in your midst we were
 as children: as if a nurse were cherishing her own children,
⁸ | so we in our love for you would gladly have imparted to
 you not only the gospel of God, but also our own souls; be-
 cause you had become most dear to us.
- ⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil. We
 worked night and day so as not to be a burden to any of
¹⁰ you while we preached to you the gospel of God. You
 are witnesses and God also, how holy and just and blame-
¹¹ less was our conduct towards you who have believed; | inas-
 much as you are aware of how we entreated and comforted
 each one of you, acting towards you as a father towards
¹² his children, | declaring to you that you should walk worthi-
 ly of God, who called you unto his kingdom and glory.

2, 1-12: As a reply to his critics, the apostle defends the manner in which he had conducted his missionary activities among the Thessalonians.

2, 2: *Shameful treatment at Philippi*: see Acts 16, 22-24. *Amid much anxiety*: see Acts 17, 5-10.

2, 3-6: These are the insinuations of Paul's enemies mentioned explicitly in v. 14.

2, 8: *Our own souls*: they would have gladly given themselves completely.

2, 9: *Night and day so as not to be a burden*: the apostle and his companions worked from daybreak to nightfall to be self-supporting. See Acts 20, 34 n.

2, 11: *Walk*: live.

13 *Thanksgiving for Their Constancy* Therefore we give thanks to God without ceasing, because when you heard and received from us the word of God, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but, as it truly is, the word of God who works in you who have believed. For you, brethren, have become imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, in that you also have suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they have from the Jews, | who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and have persecuted us. They are displeasing to God, and are hostile to all men, | because they hinder us from speaking to the Gentiles, that they may be saved. Thus they are always filling up the measure of their sins, for the wrath of God has come upon them to the utmost. But we, brethren, being bereaved of you for a short time in sight, not in heart, have made more than ordinary efforts to hasten to see you, so great has been our desire. For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—but Satan hindered us. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glory, if not you before our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Yes, you are our glory and joy.

3

1 *The Mission of Timothy* And so when we could bear it no longer we decided to remain at Athens alone, | and we sent Timothy, our brother and a servant of God in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and comfort you in your faith, | lest any should be shaken by these tribulations. For you yourselves know that we are appointed thereto. Indeed ever

2, 13: *Who works*: which works.

2, 14: *Imitators*: the Thessalonians have become imitators of the Jewish Christians in Judea who also suffered from their countrymen the Jews. (A probable reference to Acts 8, 1; 12, 1.)

2, 15: *And the prophets*: see Mt 23, 37. The severity of Paul's words in vv. 15-16 against the Jews must be balanced by his explanation of their important role in the divine plan (Rom 9, 1ff).

2, 16: *The wrath of God*: according to one opinion, God's punishment came upon the Jews because of their obstinate refusal to believe in Jesus.

2, 18: *Satan hindered us*: Paul attributes to Satan all forms of hindrance of his ministry, from inclement weather to persecutions.

2, 19: *Coming*: literally, "presence." The first of the four uses in 1 Thes of this technical New Testament key word (meaning Christ's second coming at the end of the world).

3, 1-2: Paul was so worried about the Thessalonians that he decided to send Timothy to encourage them.

when we were with you we used to tell you that we should suffer tribulations, as also it has come to pass, and you know. Consequently when I could bear it no longer I sent in order to know your faith, lest perhaps the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor might come to naught.

6 But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has made known to us your faith and charity, and your kindly remembrance of us at all times, and that you long to see us just as we long to see you, | we have accordingly found comfort in you, brethren, amid all our trials and tribulations, on account of your faith; | because now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we return to God for you for all the joy wherewith we rejoice for your sakes before our God? Night and day we pray more and more that we may see you again, and may supply those things that are lacking to your faith.

11 May God our Father and our Lord Jesus direct our way unto you. And may the Lord make you to increase and abound in charity towards one another, and towards all men just as we do towards you, | that he may strengthen your hearts, blameless in holiness before God our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints. Amen.

4

1 *Exhortation to Chastity and Charity* Moreover, brethren, even as you have learned from us how you ought to walk to please God—as indeed you are walking—we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus to make even greater progress.

2 For you know what precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification;

3 that you abstain from immorality; | that every one of you learn how to possess his vessel in holiness and honor,

3, 5: *The tempter*: although the name is different, the sense is the same as "Satan" (see 2, 18 n).

3, 8: *We live*: Paul and his companions are encouraged.

3, 10: *Those things that are lacking*: since the apostle was forced to leave Thessalonica prematurely (Acts 17, 1-10), he could not complete his religious instructions to the Thessalonians.

3, 13: *The coming*: see 2, 19 n.

4, 3: *Immorality*: sexual immorality. The pagans regarded fornication as legitimate as eating and drinking. Even their pagan religions incorporated fornication. The relinquishing of fornication was perhaps the greatest obstacle to conversion.

4, 4: *Vessel*: it is disputed whether this word refers to the man's body or that of his spouse.

- 5 | not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not
 6 know God; | that no one transgress and overreach his
 brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger of
 all these things, as we have told you before and have testi-
 7 fied. For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto
 8 holiness. Therefore, he who rejects these things rejects
 not man but God, who has also given his Holy Spirit
 to us.
- 9 But concerning brotherly charity there is no need for
 us to write to you, for you yourselves have learned from
 10 God to love one another. For indeed you practise it towards
 all the brethren all over Macedonia. But we exhort you,
 11 brethren, to make even greater progress. Strive to live
 peacefully, minding your own affairs, working with your
 12 own hands, as we charged you, | so that you may walk be-
 comingly towards outsiders, and may need nothing.

II. THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD

- 13 *Witnessed by the Dead* But we would not, brethren, have
 you ignorant concerning those who are asleep, lest you should
 14 grieve, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe
 that Jesus died and rose again, so with him God will bring
 15 those also who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For this we
 say to you in the word of the Lord, that we who live, who
 survive until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede
 16 those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself with

4, 6: *In the matter*: of sexual immorality as spoken of in vv. 3-5, especially adultery.

4, 8: *These things*: the doctrine.

4, 11: *Working*: in Greek thought, manual labor was the occupation of slaves. Paul insists on the Christian dignity of work. See 2 Thes 3, 6-12 n.

4, 12: *Outsiders*: the apostle speaks frequently of the proper impression that Christians should make on non-Christians, be they Jews or Gentiles. *And may need nothing*: Paul advises the Thessalonians to work that they may not have to depend on the material help of others.

4, 13: *Those who are asleep*: a Hebrew and Greek expression for those who are dead. See 1 Cor 11, 30 n. *As others . . . no hope*: as the pagans who have no hope except for life on earth.

4, 14: Since we believe that Jesus died and arose from the dead, so we believe that God will raise the good Christians to accompany Jesus when he comes a second time (at the end of the world).

4, 15-18: *In the word of the Lord*: some scholars do not interpret this expression as an allusion to a personal revelation or to a state-

cry of command, with voice of archangel, and with trumpet of God will descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ
 17 will rise up first. Then we who live, who survive, shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord
 18 in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

5

¹ *Time Unknown* But of the times and seasons, brethren,
² you have no need that we write to you, | for you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord is to come as a
³ thief in the night. | For when they shall say, "Peace and security," even then sudden destruction will come upon them, as birth pangs upon her who is with child, and they will not escape.

⁴ *Be Always Prepared* But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief;
⁵ | for you are all children of the light and children of the day. We are not of night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do the rest, but let us be wakeful and sober.
⁷ For they who sleep, sleep at night, and they who are drunk, are drunk at night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober. Let us put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for

ment of Jesus in the Gospel, but they interpret it to mean that Paul bases himself on the authority of Jesus.

Jesus will come at the end of the world and then the dead Christians will rise. "We," that is, those who are still alive will not die (v. 17) but will assume a glorified body and join Jesus. See 1 Cor 15, 51 n. Therefore, the Thessalonians should not mourn that the dead Christians will not resurrect, for they will all be together at the resurrection (v. 18). Paul entwines this teaching with the characteristic apocalyptic language of "cry . . . voice . . . trumpet" (v. 16).

The apostle hoped and *thought* that he would live to see Christ come at the end of the world (just as we may hope today), but there is no compelling argument, grammatical or otherwise, that he *taught* this.

5, 2: The uncertainty "of the times and seasons" of the end of the world was already preached by Jesus. See Mt 24, 36.

5, 3: Only those who trust in false "peace and security" need to feel alarmed at the second coming of Christ.

5, 5: Since Christians live in the light of the Gospel, they need not fear being unprepared when the end arrives.

5, 6: *Let us not sleep*: be spiritually alert. *As do the rest*: the pagans (see 4, 13 n).

5, 8: *Breastplate of faith . . . salvation*: compare Eph 6, 14-17.

- 9 a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us unto wrath, but to gain salvation through our Lord
 10 Jesus Christ, | who died for us in order that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
 11 Wherefore, comfort one another and edify one another, even as indeed you do.

CONCLUSION

- 12 *Obedience, Patience and Charity* Now we beseech you, brethren, to appreciate those who labor among you, and who
 13 are over you in the Lord and admonish you. Esteem them with a more abundant love on account of their work. Be
 14 at peace with them. And we exhort you, brethren, reprove the irregular, comfort the fainthearted, support the weak,
 15 be patient towards all men. See that no one renders evil for evil to any man; but always strive after good towards one another and towards all men.
 16-18 Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus regarding
 19-20 you all. Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. But test all things; hold fast that which is good.
 22 Keep yourselves from every kind of evil.
- 23 *Final Blessing and Greeting* And may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved sound, blameless at the coming
 24 of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who called you is faithful and will do this.

5, 9: *Wrath*: eternal punishment (see 1, 10 n).

5, 10: *Whether we wake or sleep*: the dead Christians and those living when Jesus comes (see 4, 15-18 n) will all share in his glory ("live together with him").

5, 12: *Those . . . who are over you*: these general terms refer to the Christian leaders of the community without specifying their titles or functions.

5, 15: *Evil for evil*: compare Prv 20, 22, "Say not, I will repay evil!"

5, 19: *Do not extinguish the Spirit*: utilize the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit.

5, 20: *Prophecies*: inspired instructions (see 1 Cor 14, 3 n).

5, 21: *Test all things*: ascertain whether they are genuine charismatic gifts or not.

5, 23: *Spirit and soul and body*: this unique Pauline expression means the whole man.

^{25,26} Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy
²⁷ kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to
²⁸ all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you. **Amen.**

5, 26: *A holy kiss*: see 1 Cor 16, 20.

5, 27: **A solemn command to the Thessalonian community.**

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

Serious objections are advanced by a few modern scholars against the traditional view that Paul wrote the second epistle to the Thessalonians. The strongest objection seems to be that 2 Thes resembles 1 Thes in so many expressions and phrases that the author of 2 Thes must have imitated Paul. These critics do not label the author a forger but a pseudepigrapher. This is a writer who attributes his work, for the sake of prestige, to a famous personage (in this instance, to Paul). An example of the legitimate literary form of pseudepigraphy is the Book of Wisdom. It was attributed to King Solomon by a first century author.

The objections raised against Pauline authenticity do not seem strong enough to rule out the traditional view held by the majority of Catholics and by many others. Their explanation is: Paul wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians a few months after the first because the Thessalonians had misunderstood him and thought that Christ's return was imminent. The apostle, therefore, reminded them in the second epistle of certain events that must precede Christ's return (see 2, 3-12 n). The abundant similarities of expressions may be easily accounted for by the fact that 1 Thes was still so fresh in Paul's memory. The proponents of the traditional view advance their explanation as the best working solution, not as a definitive solution. They admit, for instance, that Paul did not clearly refer to 1 Thes to clarify its connection with 2 Thes. Irrespective of the dispute on Pauline authenticity, it is generally held, for both epistles, that they were written about 52 A.D.

Main divisions of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-12
2. The Second Coming of Our Lord, 2, 1-17
3. Exhortation, 3, 1-15
4. Conclusion, 3, 16-18

INTRODUCTION

1

1 **Greeting** Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, to the church
2 of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ: | grace be to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 **Their Faith and Constancy** We are bound to give thanks
to God always for you, brethren. It is fitting that we should,
because your faith grows exceedingly and your charity each
4 one for the other increases. And because of this we ourselves
boast of you in the churches of God for your patience and
faith in all your persecutions and the tribulations that you are
5 enduring. In this there is a proof of the just judgment of God
counting you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which also
6 you suffer. Indeed it is just on the part of God to repay
7 with affliction those who afflict you, | and to give you who are
afflicted rest with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus, who
8 will come from heaven with the angels of his power, | in
flaming fire, to inflict punishment on those who do not know
God, and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 These will be punished with eternal ruin, away from the
10 face of the Lord and the glory of his power, | when on that
day he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be

1, 1-2: The greeting is approximately the same as that in 1 Thes 1, 1.

1, 3-4: Paul learned from an undisclosed source (3, 11) that the well-known charity among the Thessalonians (1 Thes 4, 1) was further increasing.

1, 5: In their suffering there is an indication of God's final reward to the Christians of Thessalonica.

1, 7: *Revelation*: the second coming of Jesus. See 1 Thes 4, 15-18 n.

1, 8-10: *Flaming fire . . . inflict punishment . . . from the face of the Lord and the glory of his power . . . to be glorified in his saints*: these expressions, used to depict Christ as a judge, come from Old Testament descriptions of the judgment on the Day of Yahweh. See Am 5, 18-20 n.

1, 8: *Those who do not know God*: the pagans, as in 1 Thes 4, 5, "the Gentiles who do not know God." *Who do not obey the gospel*: the unbelieving Jews, as in Rom 10, 16, "all did not obey the gospel." However, according to another opinion, both expressions "those who do not know God" and "who do not obey the gospel" are synonymous of the one same sin of unbelief committed by the same general category of sinners.

1, 10: *Glorified in his saints . . . who have believed*: the holy

marvelled at in all those who have believed. For our testimony before you has been believed.

- 11 *Prayer for Their Glorification*** To this end also we pray always for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and may fulfill with power every good purpose and
- 12** work of faith, | that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD

2

- 1 *Preludes to the Second Coming*** We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being
- 2** gathered together unto him, | not to be hastily shaken from your right mind, nor terrified, whether by spirit, or by utterance, or by letter attributed to us, as though the day of the
- 3** Lord were near at hand. Let no one deceive you in any way, for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of

lives of the faithful ("saints") will be a source of glory to Christ whose splendor will be admired in turn by the faithful. *Our testimony*: a reference to Paul's preaching among the Thessalonians.

1, 11: *Fulfill with power . . . work of faith*: may God bring to fulfillment, through his dynamic power, every good resolution and every work done through faith.

1, 12: *Glorified in you, and you in him*: see 1, 10 n.

2, 1: See 1 Thes 4, 15-18 n. *By the coming*: concerning the coming.

2, 2: *Were near at hand*: more accurately translated, "has arrived." The apostle wants to correct the false impression of the Thessalonians that Christ's second coming is most imminent. Their false impression may have been the result of a misunderstanding of an inspired instruction ("spirit," see 1 Thes 5, 20 n), or of a misinterpretation of Paul's doctrine ("utterance"), or it may have come from a letter attributed to the apostle.

2, 3-12: Paul describes the events that must precede the second coming.

2, 3: *The day of the Lord will not come*: these words are not in the Greek text, but they were placed here to give the correct meaning of the verse. *Apostasy*: Paul must have already preached to the Thessalonians about apostasy (see v. 5). In view of the use of this word elsewhere (Acts 5, 37), scholars generally understand it as a religious apostasy. The "apostates" need not necessarily mean only renegade Christians but also non-Christians who revolt against God. *The man of sin*: the three other synonyms for what is at the end of

- 4 perdition, | who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I used to tell you these things? And now you know what restrains him, that he may be revealed in his proper time. For the mystery of iniquity is already at work; provided only that he who is at present restraining it, does still restrain, until he is gotten out of the way.
- 8 And then the wicked one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of his mouth and will destroy with the brightness of his coming.
- 9 And his coming is according to the working of Satan

the first century called antichrist (see, e.g., 1 Jn 2, 18) are: "son of perdition" (v. 3); "the mystery of iniquity" (v. 7); and "the wicked one" (v. 8). *Son of perdition*: a Semitic expression for one who is entirely deserving of eternal punishment.

2, 4: *So that he*: the antichrist. *Sits in the temple . . . as if he were God*: a symbolic expression for the impiety and pride of the antichrist.

2, 5: This whole passage (vv. 3-12) is vague to the twentieth-century reader because the apostle presupposes the understanding of much of what he says since he had already preached to the Thessalonians about apostasy and the man of sin (antichrist), and of the obstacle.

2, 6: *What restrains him*: Paul supposes that the Christians at Thessalonica know the nature of the obstacle which restrains the antichrist from appearing till the end of the world.

2, 7: *The mystery of iniquity*: the antichrist. See 2, 3 n. The meaning of vv. 3-7 is: before Christ comes the second time, the apostasy must take place. It has not occurred because the obstacle prevents the antichrist from operating fully. When the obstacle is removed, the antichrist will inaugurate the apostasy. Then Christ will come. *He who is at present restraining*: the "obstacle" is here expressed in Greek in the masculine gender; in v. 6, in the neuter gender ("what restrains"). There are numerous interpretations. Is it an individual? A collectivity? A corporate personality? Some better known theories are: the forces (obstacles) that restrain the antichrist are the apostles and their successors; the charisms of the Holy Spirit; a divine decree; St. Michael; the Roman empire; all successive modern states.

2, 8: The meaning of the verse is: Christ will defeat the antichrist ("the wicked one," see 2, 3 n). *Slay . . . mouth*: see 1s 11, 4 for this imagery.

2, 9: *His coming*: the coming of the antichrist will be one of the various activities in which Satan will be implicated.

Although the apostle speaks as if there were only one antichrist, we know that from Paul's time till now the antichrist has been active (v. 7). Paul could not have meant one person. Satan is excluded in v. 9. Is the antichrist a personification of a series down through the ages that will culminate in one principal antichrist at the end of time? It seems that the tradition of the antichrist was interpreted

10 with all power and signs and lying wonders, | and with all wicked deception to those who are perishing. For they have
 11 not received the love of truth that they might be saved. Therefore God sends them a misleading influence that they may believe falsehood, | that all may be judged who have not believed the truth, but have preferred wickedness.

13 *Thanksgiving for Their Election* But we, brethren beloved of God, are bound to give thanks to God always for you, because God has chosen you as first-fruits unto salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the
 14 truth. For this purpose he also called you by our preaching
 15 to gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm, and hold the teachings that you have learned,
 16 whether by word or by letter of ours. And may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved us and has given us through grace everlasting consolation and
 17 good hope, | comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

II. EXHORTATION

3

1 *Request for Mutual Prayer* In conclusion, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified
 2 even as among you, | and that we may be delivered from troublesome and evil men; for not all men have the faith.
 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will strengthen you and

freely because in 1 Jn 2, 18, for instance, the author considers the antichrist fulfilled in the heretics of his day.

2, 10: *Are perishing*: will perish.

2, 11: It is characteristic of the inspired writers to attribute everything to God. *A misleading influence*: a delusion.

2, 12: *Judged*: condemned.

2, 13: *As first-fruits*: an alternate Greek reading is "from the beginning" (i.e., from all eternity). "First-fruits" means first converts.

2, 15: *Teachings*: literally, "traditions," taught by Paul orally ("by word") or in writing ("by letter of ours," a reference to 1 Thes.).

St. John Chrysostom, followed by many commentators, used this text as a classic proof of the two fonts of revelation: scripture, and tradition. However, Paul did not intend to declare himself on this issue but he merely wanted to refer to his oral and written instructions to the Thessalonians.

3, 1: *Word of the Lord*: the Gospel. *May run*: may spread rapidly, a term taken from sports.

3, 2: *Troublesome and evil*: a strong and unique phrase in the whole Greek Bible.

4 guard you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord as regards you, that you both do and will do the things that
5 we enjoin. And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and the patience of Christ.

6 **Against Idleness** And we charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw yourselves from every brother who lives irregularly, and not according to the teaching received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; for we were not unruly while with you,
8 | neither did we eat any man's bread at his cost, but we worked night and day in labor and toil, so that we might not
9 burden any of you. Not that we did not have the right to do so, but that we might make ourselves an example for
10 you to imitate us. For indeed when we were with you we used to charge you: if any man will not work, neither let
11 him eat. For we have heard that some among you are living
12 irregularly, doing no work but busy at meddling. Now such persons we charge and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ that they work quietly and eat their own bread.

13 But you, brethren, do not grow tired of well-doing.
14 And if anyone does not obey our word by this letter, note that man and do not associate with him, that he may be
15 put to shame. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

CONCLUSION

16 **Final Blessing and Greeting** And may the Lord of peace himself give you everlasting peace in every place. The Lord
17 be with you all. I, Paul, greet you with my own hand. This is
18 the mark in every letter. Thus I write. | The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

3, 6-12: Scholars in general agree that in this passage Paul encourages the Thessalonians to work, for some of them in expectation of Christ's imminent return considered all work useless. The idlers were not only unsettling others, they also wanted to live off the community. The idleness had seemingly increased since Paul's first letter (see 1 Thes 4, 11).

1, 6: *Who lives irregularly*: in idleness. *Teaching*: literally, "tradition" (see 2, 15 n).

3, 8-9: See 1 Thes 2, 9.

3, 16: *In every place*: a variant Greek reading has: "in every way."

3, 17: Paul takes the "pen" from his "secretary" and signs his signature as the "mark" of identification of his letters. *Thus I write*: it means, "I am writing this."

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The two epistles written to Timothy who was at Ephesus, and the letter written to Titus who was at Crete, are called the pastoral epistles. All three outline the proper way for Church leaders to conduct themselves and to govern their faithful. Timothy and Titus are constantly exhorted to preach sound doctrine in governing the Church.

The most controversial among the introductory literary problems of date and place, etc., in the pastoral epistles is that of their authorship. Some scholars hold it more difficult to determine the author of the pastorals than the author of any other New Testament writing. Up to the nineteenth century, the pastoral epistles were attributed to St. Paul. More recent scholarly studies have indicated historical, linguistic, and doctrinal reasons to disprove that these letters were written by Paul. The historical reason lies in the difficulty to fit the situations and circumstances depicted in the pastorals into the life of the apostle as known from his epistles and from Acts.

The scholarly linguists have provided the most telling argument against Paul's authorship. From 902 Greek words, including fifty-four proper names, 306 (or more than one-third) are not found in the other ten letters, the epistle to the Hebrews excluded. Besides, the vocabulary and style of the pastorals are admittedly superior to, and unlike the apostle's in comparison with his other letters.

According to a definite modern trend, many scholars no longer try to prove that Paul is the author. In recent years they have suggested that the apostle employed a secretary, probably St. Luke, to whom similarities between his Gospel-Acts and the pastorals would point.

A well-known probable opinion, especially among Protestants, concerns the fragment theory, which rejects the secretary-suggestion and theorizes that some original Pauline fragments have been incorporated into the pastorals by a disciple. The more plausible fragments include 2 Tm 1, 15-18; 4, 9-22; Ti 3, 12-15.

The question of authenticity is still disputed. There are those who hold for Paul or a secretary whom he employed; and there are others who hold for a pseudonymous writer long after Paul's death. This writer may or may not have used some Pauline fragments.

The commentators who advance Paul or his secretary as author usually give the chronological order of the pastorals as: 1 Tm, Ti, 2 Tm. (The traditional sequence followed in Bible translations, as in CCD, is: 1 Tm, 2 Tm, Ti.) The non-traditional sequence is based on the assumption that Paul traveled throughout the Mediterranean Basin after his first Roman imprisonment. In the course of this voyage, he left Timothy at Ephesus and Titus at Crete. Paul then wrote to both from Macedonia (1 Tm 1, 3). During the apostle's second Roman imprisonment he is supposed to have

written 2 Tm. The three letters would, according to this theory, date from shortly before his death (63-67 A.D.).

The advocates of a pseudonymous writer of the pastoral epistles frequently follow this sequence: 2 Tm, Ti, 1 Tm. Their arguments in favor of this sequence are based on the internal criticism of the biblical text itself. Many of these scholars date the pastorals from 90-120 A.D.

The pastorals often speak of false teachers. When all the scattered remarks of the false teaching are collected, there does not emerge a clear enough sketch to identify from it any specific false doctrinal teaching. Perhaps the teachers did not believe in the same tenets, and they may even have differed among themselves. Nevertheless, the inspired author is more intent on combating and revealing the evils of the false teaching than he is on analyzing them. Yet, the false doctrinal teaching contains elements that are Jewish and Gnostic. The Jewish elements are rather clear in such expressions as "Jewish fables" (Ti 1, 14) and "fables and endless genealogies" (1 Tm 1, 4; 4, 7; 2 Tm 4, 4).

The Gnostic element is more elusive. Experts agree on this point: if there is any text in the pastorals that discloses some form of Gnosticism it is 1 Tm 6, 20: "avoid . . . the contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge . . .". The Greek may be translated, "falsely called knowledge" or "pseudonymous gnosis," the very term used by St. Irenaeus in his description of the Gnostic movement developed in postbiblical days. Even if 1 Tm 6, 20 refers to Gnosticism, it does not cast much light on other passages in the pastorals. Consequently, due to a lack of evidence, scholars are often uncertain whether a false belief that is mentioned in the pastorals stems from Judaism, Gnosticism, or from both, or from neither. See, for instance, the denial of the resurrection (explained in 2 Tm 2, 18 n) and the rigorous asceticism (explained in 1 Tm 4, 3 n).

The final and best summation given by present-day scholarship on the question seems to be that the false doctrinal teaching contains Jewish-Gnostic elements. (Perhaps the same group of false teachers taught the two-pronged doctrine as explained in Ti 1, 10 n.) Or, an even more cautious statement may be that any of the false doctrinal teaching emerged from a simultaneously Jewish and Gnostic background. One fact seems clear: the Gnostic segments found in the pastorals consisted of merely disparate rudimentary elements that only gradually were incorporated into a systematized Gnosticism of the second century A.D. Moreover, besides the rudimentary Gnostic notion of a multiplicity of intermediary beings between God and man, there is this basic notion: matter is evil (see 1 Tm 4, 3-5 n; 2 Tm 2, 18 n).

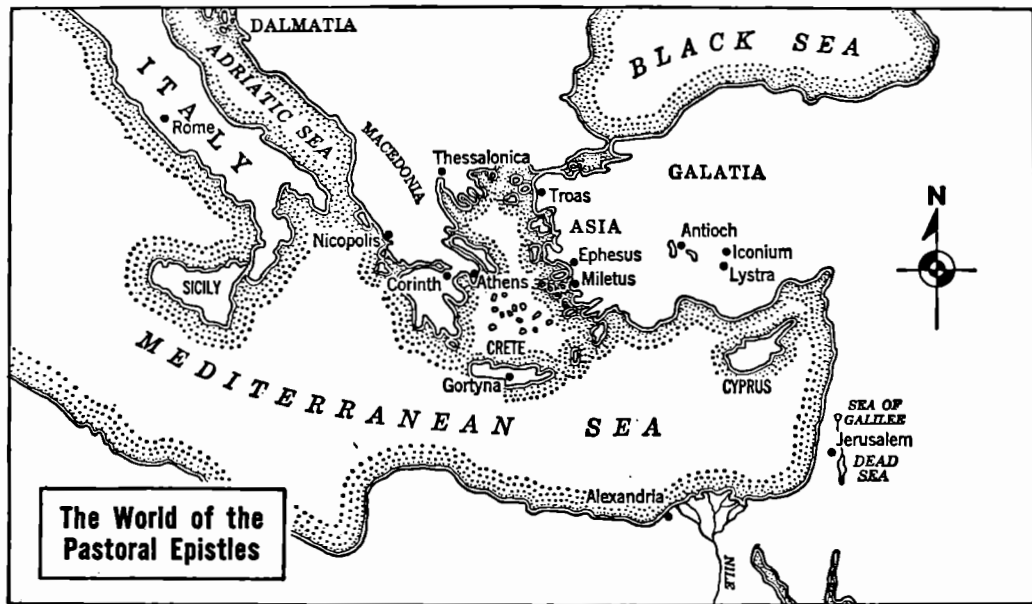
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

A sketch of Timothy's life may be pieced together from the Acts of the Apostles and from various epistles. Timothy was a native of Lystra in Lycaonia (Turkey). His father was a pagan, his mother, Eunice, a convert from Judaism (Acts 16, 1). Timothy joined Paul when the apostle went on his second missionary journey. Henceforth, they were often together. Paul would send Timothy, whenever necessary, on missionary errands to various cities; once from Athens to Thessalonica (1 Thes 3, 2ff), and another time from Ephesus to Corinth (1 Cor 4, 17). Timothy assisted about six times in delivering Paul's letters. (The Roman liturgy celebrates the feast of Timothy on January 24.)

Main divisions of the First Epistle to Timothy are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-2
2. Against False Teachers, 1, 3-20
3. Pastoral Charge, 2, 1—3, 13
4. Against False Doctrine, 3, 14—4, 16
5. Duties toward the Flock, 5, 1—6, 19
6. Conclusion, 6, 20-21



INTRODUCTION

1

1 Greeting Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the order of
2 God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus our hope, | to Timothy
his beloved son in the faith: grace, mercy and peace from
God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

I. AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

3 Timothy's Mission at Ephesus When I went to Macedonia, I asked thee to stay on at Ephesus that thou mightest
4 charge some not to teach novel doctrines, | and not to study
fables and endless genealogies which beget controversy
5 rather than godly edification, which is in the faith. Now the
purpose of this charge is charity, from a pure heart and
6 good conscience and faith unfeigned. Some going astray from
7 these things have turned aside to vain babbling, | desiring to
be teachers of the Law, when they understand neither what
they say nor the things about which they make assertion.

8 Rôle of the Law But we know that the Law is good, if a

1, 1-2: The preface to each pastoral epistle contains the name of Paul, the divinely appointed apostle, who addresses and instructs his younger delegate. The advocates of a pseudonymous writer (see: *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 688) understand "Paul" just as the inspired writer intended it to be understood, namely, as if Paul were writing to Timothy (and to Titus in Ti 1, 1).

1, 1: *God our Savior*: the title "Savior" as applied to God is found frequently in the Old Testament but rarely in the New Testament. The use of this title is characteristic of the pastorals.

1, 3: The scholars who uphold Paul's authorship do not agree on the date of the apostle's visit to Macedonia, or they say that it is unknown. Those who advocate a pseudonymous author interpret the account of this visit as literary fiction, a feature of the literary form of pseudepigraphy.

1, 4: *Fables and endless genealogies*: this looks like a Jewish element in the false teaching which the writer is combating. (See: *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 688). *Godly edification*: in Greek, "the economy of God," the divine plan founded on faith ("which is in the faith").

1, 5: *A pure heart*: a Semitic expression for sincerity.

1, 6: The author of the pastorals frequently upbraids prattlers of religion.

1, 7-8: *Law*: because the word is not capitalized in the original Greek, it is unclear whether "the Law" refers to the Mosaic Law or to the moral law. Since "Law," especially in v. 8, may mean the Mosaic Law, see Rom 7, 12.

9 man uses it rightly, | knowing that the Law is not made for the just, but for the unjust and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for criminals and the defiled, for parricides and
 10 matricides, for murderers, | for immoral people, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and whatever else is
 11 contrary to the sound doctrine, | according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which has been committed to my trust.

12 *The Apostle's Own Life* I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he counted me trust-
 13 worthy in making me his minister. For I formerly was a blasphemer, a persecutor and a bitter adversary; but I obtained the mercy of God because I acted ignorantly, in unbe-
 14 lief. Indeed, the grace of our Lord has abounded beyond
 15 measure in the faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. This saying is true and worthy of entire acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the
 16 chief. But for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might show forth all patience, as an example to those who shall believe in him for the attainment of life
 17 everlasting. To the King of the ages who is immortal, invisible, the one only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

18 *Fidelity to Vocation* I commit to thee this charge, my son Timothy, that according to the prophecies once made concerning thee, thou mayest fight the good fight by means of

1, 9-10: Recent studies show that the lists of vices (similar to those in Gal 5, 19-21; Rom 13, 13) originate from a Hellenistic-Jewish tradition and ultimately from a prolific oriental tradition. The important emergent is that these are stock words; they do not convey a specific description of the vices of the false teachers in question. (See Rom 1, 28-31 n on the lists of vices.)

1, 10: *Sound doctrine*: a favorite phrase in the pastorals, it is not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

1, 14: *Has abounded . . . in Christ Jesus*: a better translation is: "has abounded in me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." *Love*: the pastorals often praise or strongly recommend the love of God.

1, 16: The inspired writer claims that he received forgiveness, so that he may serve as an example of the great patience Jesus has with sinners.

1, 18-20: After an autobiographical digression (vv. 12-17), the author returns to the charge committed to Timothy.

1, 18: *My son*: this term of affection signifies the relationship between pupil and master or between lower and higher official rather than the difference in age. *According to the prophecies . . . by means*

19 them, | having faith and a good conscience. Some rejecting
 20 this have made shipwreck of the faith, | among whom are
 Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered up to Satan
 that they may learn not to blaspheme.

II. PASTORAL CHARGE

2

1 *Directions on Prayer* I urge therefore, first of all, that
 supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made
 2 for all men; | for kings, and for all in high positions, that
 we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and worthy
 3 behavior. This is good and agreeable in the sight of God
 4 our Savior, | who wishes all men to be saved and to come
 5 to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one
 Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, |
 6 who gave himself a ransom for all, bearing witness in his
 7 own time. To this I have been appointed a preacher and an
 apostle (I tell the truth, I do not lie), a teacher of the Gen-
 tiles in faith and truth.

8 *Women in Public Assemblies* I wish, then, that the men

of them: at Timothy's ordination, some divinely inspired prophets seem to have uttered analogous declarations as at the event described in Acts 13, 1-3. The writer now encourages Timothy to continue his ministry in the spirit of the "prophecies" that were made at his ordination.

1, 19: *Shipwreck*: the only use of this metaphor in the New Testament.

1, 20: *Hymeneus*: mentioned in 2 Tm 2, 17. *Alexander*: mentioned in 2 Tm 4, 14. Although these two names reappear in 2 Tm, it does not necessarily follow that they are the same persons. Besides, those who hold that 1 Tm is a pseudonymous writing would say that the names are fictitious and used only to lend color to a personal letter. *Satan*: the excommunication ceases when the excommunicated person repents.

2, 1: *First of all*: this is better understood as a phrase for smooth transition rather than as a directive that prayer is of the first importance in the liturgy.

2, 2: *For kings*: the duty to pray for kings was recognized in the Old Testament (see 1 Mc 7, 33).

2, 4: This verse contains a highly consoling theological doctrine. *Wishes*: the Greek verb used here (*thelein*) means "to desire," in contrast with the Greek verb *boulesthai*, which connotes an absolute command.

2, 6: *Bearing witness in his own time*: at an appointed time Jesus declared that he came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20, 28).

2, 8: *Men*: apparently, contrary to the former Jewish custom, the

pray everywhere, lifting up pure hands, without wrath and
 9 contention. In like manner I wish women to be decently
 dressed, adorning themselves with modesty and dignity, not
 10 with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothing, | but
 with good works such as become women professing godliness.
 11,12 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. For I do
 not allow a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over
 13 men; but she is to keep quiet. For Adam was formed first,
 14 then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was
 15 deceived and was in sin. Yet women will be saved by child-
 bearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with
 modesty.

3

1 *Qualities of a Bishop* This saying is true: If anyone is
 2 eager for the office of bishop, he desires a good work. A
 bishop then, must be blameless, married but once, reserved,
 3 prudent, of good conduct, hospitable, a teacher, | not a drinker
 or a brawler, but moderate, not quarrelsome, not avaricious.
 4 He should rule well his own household, keeping his children
 5 under control and perfectly respectful. For if a man cannot

women were beginning to pray with men in the synagogue.
Everywhere: in all their meeting places. *Lifting up pure hands*: in the
 Roman catacombs, the representation of Christians standing erect with
 palms upward attest to this gesture of prayer. The adjective "pure"
 in the phrase "lifting up pure hands" is better translated as "holy,"
 which is explained by "without wrath and contention." Compare, "He
 prayeth best, who loveth best"—Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*.

2, 9: There may be an indication here that the Christian women
 did not come from the poorest classes.

2, 10: *Good works*: a characteristic expression in the pastorals.

2, 11-15: Neither here nor in any other similar New Testament
 passage is the spiritual equality of man and woman denied.

2, 11-12: The women are not to speak and ask questions in the
 Christian meeting-places, but they are to listen to the instructions of
 the men (see 1 Cor 14, 34-35).

2, 13-14: The author's way of arguing from Gn 1, 26 and 3, 6
 accords well with the mentality of his day.

2, 15: *Childbearing*: this seems like an attack on the false teachers
 (see 4, 3).

3, 1: *Bishop*: literally, "overseer." In the New Testament, "bishop"
 (*episcopos*) and "presbyter" or elder (*presbuteros*) were used inter-
 changeably. See Acts 20, 17 n and 1 Tm 4, 14 n.

3, 2-5: The qualities listed here resemble those necessary for men
 who aspired to obtain secular positions.

3, 2: *Married but once*: priestly celibacy was instituted later. Second
 marriages are not condemned. *Hospitable*: this quality was emphasized
 among the early Christians.

rule his own household, how is he to take care of the church of God? He must not be a new convert, lest he be puffed up with pride and incur the condemnation passed on the devil. Besides this he must have a good reputation with those who are outside, that he may not fall into disgrace and into a snare of the devil.

8 Qualities of a Deacon Deacons also must be honorable, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for base gain, | but holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And let them first be tried, and if found without reproach let them be allowed to serve. In like manner let the women be honorable, not slanderers, but reserved, faithful in all things. Deacons should be men who have been married but once, ruling well their children and their own household. And those who have fulfilled well this office will acquire a good position and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

III. AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE

14 Pillar and Mainstay of the Truth I write these things to thee hoping to come to thee shortly, | but in order that thou mayest know, if I am delayed, how to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and mainstay of the truth. And obviously great is the mystery of godliness:

3, 6: *Incur the condemnation . . . devil*: lest he be condemned to pride as Lucifer was.

3, 7: *Who are outside*: Jews and pagans. *Disgrace . . . snare* the last two phrases of v. 7 are synonymous.

3, 8: *Deacons*: literally, "servants," and Latinized to "ministers." See Acts 6, 6 n. *Not double-tongued*: not saying one thing while meaning something different, or not saying one thing to one person and a different thing to another.

3, 9: *A pure conscience*: synonym for "a pure heart" to mean sincerity (see 1, 5 n).

3, 10: The manner of trial is not disclosed but whether the candidate fulfilled most of the requirements would be a matter of public knowledge. Hence, professional secrecy would not seem to be violated here.

3, 11: *The women*: because the author lists ecclesiastics in a descending scale (from 3, 1ff.) and because of other reasons, the more probable opinion is that "the women" refers to official deaconesses rather than to the wives of bishop-priests (vv. 1-7) and of deacons (vv. 8-10).

3, 16: *The mystery of godliness*: the Gospel. *Which was manifested . . . in glory*: this passage seems to be a fragment of a liturgical

Which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared to angels, was preached to Gentiles, believed in the world, taken up in glory.

4

1 Lying Teachers Now the Spirit expressly says that in after times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies hypocritically, and having their conscience branded. They will forbid marriage, and will enjoin abstinence from foods, which God has created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by the faithful and by those who know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected that is accepted with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 Piety and False Asceticism By recommending these things to the brethren, thou wilt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished with the words of faith and of the good doctrine to which thou hast attained. But avoid foolish fables and old wives' tales and train thyself in godliness. For bodily training is of little profit, while godliness is profitable in all respects, since it has the promise of the present life as well as of that which is to come. This saying is true and worthy of entire

hymn or creed. *Which*: in Greek, "who," i.e., Christ. *Was justified in the spirit*: the phrase probably means that during his ministry Jesus was vindicated by miracles through the Holy Spirit, or that he was vindicated by the resurrection through the same Spirit. *Appeared to angels*: probably at his ascension. *Believed in the world*: the world believed in Jesus after he "was preached to the Gentiles." *Taken up in glory*: not a reference to the ascension. The expression probably means that Jesus is enthroned metaphorically in heaven through man's obedience to him.

4, 1: The Holy Spirit said either to the sacred writer or to a prophet that in the Messianic times, i.e., from the time of Christ to the end of the world, there will be apostates (compare Mt 24, 23ff.).

4, 2: *Having their conscience branded*: the false teachers (the "some" of v. 1) will be branded to show that they are in the service of the "devils." The branding of slaves and criminals on their foreheads provided the background for this metaphor.

4, 3-5: A fundamentally Gnostic teaching was: matter is evil (vv. 4-5). Some scholars relate the two erroneous ascetic practices (mentioned in v. 3) to this teaching.

4, 5: *By the word of God*: a probable reference to God's creating word as described in Gn 1, 3.

4, 8: *Bodily training*: a figure taken from the world of sports and used by other moral teachers at that time.

10 acceptance; | for we work and are reviled for this reason, that we hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

11.12 **Zeal in His Office** Command and teach these things. Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example to the faithful in speech, in conduct, in charity, in faith, in chastity. 13 Until I come, be diligent in reading, in exhortation and in 14 teaching. Do not neglect the grace that is in thee, granted to thee by reason of prophecy with the laying on of hands of the 15 presbyterate. Meditate on these things, give thyself entirely to 16 them, that thy progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing thou wilt save both thyself and those who hear thee.

IV. DUTIES TOWARDS THE FLOCK

5

1 **Different Classes** Do not rebuke an elderly man, but exhort him as you would a father, and young men as brothers, | 2 elderly women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all chastity.

3.4 **Widows** Honor widows who are truly widowed. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let these first learn to provide for their own household and make some return to 5 their parents, for this is pleasing to God. But she who is truly a widow, and left solitary, has set her hope on God and 6 continues in supplications and prayers night and day. For she who gives herself up to pleasures is dead while she is still

4, 12: *Thy youth*: it is estimated that Timothy was less than forty years old. Those who believe the letter to be pseudonymous explain it as part of the literary form that an older man write instructions to a younger subordinate.

4, 14: *Prophecy*: see 1, 18 n. *Presbyterate*: this word usually means the Sanhedrin, but here it is used for the first time to mean Christian priests who formed the autonomous ruling body of a Christian community.

4, 16: Timothy must pay close attention to his character and to the purity of his teaching if he wants to enjoy a successful ministry.

5, 3: *Honor*: material support is implied. *Truly widowed*: see v. 5. The Christians continued the Jewish custom from Old Testament days to care for widows.

5, 4: *Let these . . . parents*: the children and grandchildren of a widow should provide for her.

5, 6: *Dead*: spiritually dead.

7.8 alive. And command them to be blameless. But if anyone does not take care of his own, and especially of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let a widow who is selected be not less than sixty years
10 old, having been married but once, | with a reputation for her good works in bringing up children, in practising hospitality, in washing the saints' feet, in helping those in trouble,
11 in carefully pursuing every good work. But refuse younger widows, for when they have wantonly turned away from
12 Christ, they wish to marry, | and are to be condemned because they have broken their first troth. And further, being
13 idle, they learn to go about from house to house, and are not only idle but gossipers as well and busybodies, mentioning things they ought not. I desire therefore that the
14 younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the adversary no occasion for abusing us. For already
15 some have turned aside after Satan. If any believing woman has widowed relatives, let her provide for them and do not let the Church be burdened, in order that there may
16 be enough for those who are truly widows.

17 **Presbyters** Let the presbyters who rule well be held worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the
18 word and in teaching. | For the Scripture says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain," and, "The la-

5, 8: *He has denied the faith*: the "faith which works through charity," Gal 5, 6.

5, 9-15: The widows who do not need the help of the Church (v. 4) and those who do need it ("true widows" vv. 3-8 and 16) are both distinguished from a third class of widows who are official Church workers (vv. 9-15).

5, 10: *Washing the saints' feet*: see Jn 13, 1-13.

5, 11-12: *Younger widows*: under sixty: *For when . . . they wish to marry*: it seems that the younger widows took some kind of a promise or vow (for life?) not to marry again, and to perform official good works. Yet, when the opportunity for marriage arose, they abandoned their promises and good works.

5, 14: The younger widows should marry and thereby prevent criticism against the Church from non-Christians ("adversary"). The recommendation of virginity in 1 Cor 7, 40 pertains to a different situation.

5, 15: *Turned aside after Satan*: some younger widows either had already remarried or had misbehaved (see v. 13).

5, 16: *Truly widows*: see 5, 9-15 n.

5, 17: *Presbyters*: see 3, 1 n. *Double honor*: "double pay" or ample remuneration. *Word*: preaching.

5, 18: The first quotation is from Dt 25, 4; the second is either taken from Lk 10, 7 or comes from an oral tradition of Christ's words.

19 borer is worthy of his wages." Do not listen to an accusation against a presbyter unless it is supported by two or
 20 three witnesses. When they sin, rebuke them in the presence
 21 of all, that the rest also may have fear. I charge thee before
 God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels that thou observe
 22 these things impartially, in no way favoring either side. Do
 not lay hands hastily upon anyone, and do not be a partner
 23 in other men's sins. Keep thyself chaste. | Stop drinking
 water only, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and
 24 thy frequent infirmities. Some men's sins are manifest even
 25 before investigation, other men's sins only afterwards. In like
 manner also the good works are manifest, and those that
 are otherwise cannot be hidden.

6

1 **Slaves** Let slaves who are under the yoke account their
 masters deserving of all honor, that the name of the Lord and
 2 his teaching be not blasphemed. And when they have masters
 who are believers, let them not despise them because they are
 brethren, but let them serve them all the more because they
 who receive their services are believers and beloved. Teach and
 exhort these things.

3 **Lying Teachers** If anyone teaches otherwise and does not
 agree with the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 4 and that doctrine which is according to godliness, | he is
 proud, knowing nothing, but doting about controversies and

5, 19: *Two or three witnesses*: according to Mt 18, 16, Jesus adopted this Old Testament custom.

5, 20: *When they sin*: who are "they"? The elders? Sinners in general?

5, 22: *Lay hands*: this gesture signifies the conferral of an official position in the Church, beginning with the highest, the "episcopacy," (such as Timothy enjoys), the priesthood, the diaconate. *A partner*: to ordain an unworthy candidate is to take part, in a sense, in that candidate's future wrongdoing.

5, 23: This abrupt parenthesis is characteristically Pauline. In those days, therapeutic value was attributed to wine for a variety of ailments.

5, 24: The defects of some candidates are obvious.

6, 1-2: Christian slaves must respect their pagan masters and thus honor the Church; the slaves must not take advantage of the charity which their masters should show them. The same practical attitude toward slavery and advice to slaves are found in the epistle to Philemon.

6, 3: *Sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ*: a modern rendition of this phrase may be: "the tradition of the Church."

disputes of words. From these arise envies, quarrels, blasphemies, base suspicions, | the wranglings of men corrupt in mind and bereft of truth, supposing godliness to be gain. And godliness with contentment is indeed great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and certainly we can take nothing out; | but having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content. But those who seek to become rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many useless and harmful desires, which plunge men into destruction and damnation. For covetousness is the root of all evils, and some in their eagerness to get rich have strayed from the faith and have involved themselves in many troubles.

11 Final Plea But thou, O man of God, flee these things; but pursue justice, godliness, faith, charity, patience, mildness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, to which thou hast been called, and hast made the good confession before many witnesses. I charge thee in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and in the sight of Christ Jesus, who bore witness before Pontius Pilate to the good confession, that thou keep the commandment without stain, blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This coming he in his own time will make manifest, who is the Blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; | who alone has immortality and dwells in light inaccessible, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting dominion. Amen.

17 The Rich Charge the rich of this world not to be proud, or to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in God, who provides all things in abundance for our enjoyment. Let them do good and be rich in good works, giving readily, sharing with others, | and thus providing for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, in order that they may lay hold on the true life.

6, 7: Compare Jb 1, 21.

6, 10: This proverb about covetousness came from secular contemporary sources. It may mean that there is no evil to which the love of money cannot lead.

6, 12: *Good fight*: a metaphor not drawn from warfare, but from wrestling or another sport of the arena. *Confession before many witnesses*: a reference to Timothy's baptism or ordination.

6, 13: *Pontius Pilate*: a reference to Mt 27, 11.

CONCLUSION

- ²⁰ *Exhortation and Greeting* O Timothy, guard the trust and keep free from profane novelties in speech and the contradictions of so-called knowledge, which some have professed and have fallen away from the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.
- ²¹

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

The commentators who consider Paul the author of the second letter to Timothy assume that the apostle journeyed to Asia Minor after his first imprisonment in Rome (2 Tm 4, 13). They further assume a second imprisonment in Rome, during which Paul wrote 2 Tm. According to these commentators, the apostle asked Timothy to come to him (4, 9) from Ephesus (1, 18) even though the apostle's execution was drawing near (4, 6).

On the other hand, the scholars who consider 2 Tm pseudonymous and who date this epistle from a period long after Paul's death do not feel forced to posit either one of the two imprisonments in Rome. The epistle's allusions to prison would be in accordance with the literary form of pseudepigraphy.

Whether the epistle is pseudonymous or not, the author presents himself as an example to Timothy in the fight to preserve the faith from heresies and the Christians from moral corruption. Timothy is exhorted to hand down the deposit of faith to worthy successors. For the characteristics common to 1, 2 Tm and Ti see: *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 688.

Main divisions of the Second Epistle to Timothy are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-5
2. Pastoral Charge, 1, 6—2, 13
3. Fidelity to His Office, 2, 14—4, 8
4. Conclusion, 4, 9-22

INTRODUCTION

1

1 *Greeting* Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, in accordance with the promise of life in Christ Jesus
2 | to Timothy, my beloved son: grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 *Thanksgiving and Prayer* I give thanks to God, whom I serve as did my forefathers, with a clear conscience, that
4 I remember thee without ceasing in my prayers night and day. Recalling thy tears, I long to see thee, that I may be filled
5 with joy. I remember that unfeigned faith of thine, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and in thy mother Eunice, and dwells, I am certain, in thee also.

I. PASTORAL CHARGE

6 *Paul's Example* For this reason I admonish thee to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the laying on of
7 my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of
8 power and of love and of prudence. Do not, therefore, be ashamed of testimony for our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but enter into my sufferings for the gospel through the
9 power of God. He has redeemed us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and the grace which was granted to
10 us in Christ Jesus before this world existed, | but now made known by the manifestation of our Savior Jesus Christ. He has destroyed death and brought to light life and incorruption
11 by the gospel, | of which I have been appointed a preacher

1, 1-2: See 1 Tm 1, 1-2 n on the greeting, and on "Paul."

1, 1: *In accordance . . . Jesus*: the purpose of Paul's election as an apostle was to preach Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

1, 3: *Clear conscience*: sincerity (see 1 Tm 3, 9 n).

1, 4: *Tears*: probably a reference to an occasion of farewell.

1, 5: *Eunice*: "a believing Jewess" (Acts 16, 1). The inspired writer does not necessarily mean that Timothy's mother and grandmother were Christians; he may be referring to their Jewish faith.

1, 6: *Laying on of my hands*: a reference to Timothy's priestly ordination. See 1 Tm 4, 14 n.

1, 7: Compare Rom 8, 15.

1, 9: Compare Ti 3, 5.

1, 10: *Incorruption*: immortality.

12 and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. That is why also I am suffering these things; yet I am not ashamed. For I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that he is able
13 to guard the trust committed to me against that day. Hold to the form of sound teaching which thou hast heard from
14 me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good trust through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us.

15 **Loyalty and Defections** This thou knowest that all in the province of Asia have turned away from me, among them,
16 Phigelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, because he often comforted me
17 and was not ashamed of my chains; | but when he came to
18 Rome, he sought me out diligently and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. And thou knowest very well the many services he rendered me at Ephesus.

2

1 **Devotion to His Office** Therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; | and the things
2 that thou hast heard from me through many witnesses, commend to trustworthy men who shall be competent in turn
3 to teach others. Conduct thyself in work as a good soldier
4 of Christ Jesus. No one serving as God's soldier entangles himself in worldly affairs, that he may please him whose
5 approval he has secured. And again, one who enters a contest is not crowned unless he has competed according to the
6 rules. The farmer who toils must be the first to partake
7 of the fruits. Take in what I tell thee, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things.

1, 12: *That day*: of the second coming of Christ (see v. 18).

1, 15: The author refers perhaps to an unknown occasion when all his friends abandoned him or his doctrine or both. *Phigelus and Hermogenes*: otherwise unknown in the New Testament. It is difficult to know the nature of their offense.

1, 16: *Onesiphorus*: except here and in 4, 19, he is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.

1, 18: *On that day*: see 1, 12 n. From the author's manner of speaking it seems that Onesiphorus was dead.

2, 2: *Through many witnesses*: the writer alludes perhaps to his preaching of the Gospel to Timothy "in the presence of" (instead of "through") many bystanders.

2, 4: *Entangles . . . secured*: in Greek, "involves himself in affairs of everyday life, since he aims to satisfy the one who enlisted him."

⁸ *The Thought of Christ* Remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and was descended from David; this is my ⁹ gospel, | in which I suffer even to bonds, as a criminal. But ¹⁰ the word of God is not bound. This is why I bear all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the ¹¹ salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory. This saying is true: If we have died with him, we shall also live ¹² with him; | if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we ¹³ disown him, he also will disown us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

II. FIDELITY TO HIS OFFICE

¹⁴ *False Teachers* Recall these things to their minds, charging them in the sight of the Lord not to dispute with words, ¹⁵ for that is useless, leading to the ruin of the listeners. Use all care to present thyself to God as a man approved, a worker that cannot be ashamed, rightly handling the ¹⁶ word of truth. But avoid profane and empty babblings, ¹⁷ for they contribute much to ungodliness, | and their speech spreads like a cancer. Of this sort are Hymeneus and Phil- ¹⁸ etus, | who have erred from the truth in saying that the resurrection has taken place already; and they are destroying the faith of some.

¹⁹ *The Faithful Servant* But the sure foundation of God stands firm, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows who are his"; and, "Let everyone depart from iniquity who names the name of the Lord."

2, 10: *The elect*: the "saints" or the faithful.

2, 11-13: *This saying is true*: these verses comprise a fragment of a hymn or creed that does not fit well in this context.

2, 11: See Rom 6, 4-5 n.

2, 13: *For he cannot disown himself*: Jesus would deny his divine nature if he became faithless.

2, 17: *Cancer*: the pastorals abound with medical metaphors. *Hymeneus and Philetus*: see 1 Tm 1, 20 n; Philetus is otherwise unknown. These two men apparently tried to drag other Christians into apostasy.

2, 18: *The resurrection has taken place already*: these false teachers probably denied the resurrection of the body at the end of the world and believed in only a spiritual resurrection from sin at baptism. Some scholars attempt to connect this heresy with the teaching of Gnosticism on the evil of matter.

2, 19: *Foundation*: probably means the Church. The first quotation is from Nm 16, 5; the second is either a loose quotation from Nm 16, 26, or it is a combination of other Old Testament texts.

20 But in a great house there are vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; and some are for
 21 honorable uses, but some for ignoble. If anyone, therefore, has cleansed himself from these, he will be a vessel for honorable use, sanctified and useful to the Lord, ready for
 22 every good work. But flee the cravings of youth and pursue justice, faith, charity and peace with those who call
 23 on the Lord from a pure heart. Avoid also foolish and ignorant controversies, knowing that they breed quarrels.
 24 But the servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle towards all, ready to teach, patient, | gently admonishing those who resist, in case God should give them repentance
 26 to know the truth, | and they recover themselves from the snare of the devil, to whose will they are held captive.

3

1 *Against New Teachers* But know this, that in the last
 2 days dangerous times will come. Men will be lovers of self, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to
 3 parents, ungrateful, criminal, | heartless, faithless, slanderers,
 4 incontinent, merciless, unkind, | treacherous, stubborn, puffed
 5 up with pride, loving pleasure more than God; | having a semblance indeed of piety, but disowning its power.
 6 Avoid these. | For of such are they who make their way into houses and captivate silly women who are sin-laden

It is probable that the story of Core and his adherents in Nm 16 is the key to v. 19. Core, Dathan, and Abiram who opposed Moses were separated from the faithful followers and engulfed into the pit. The implied application is that Hymeneus and Philetus and their supporters do not belong to God's Church, and the faithful are therefore to depart from their company as from "iniquity."

2, 20-21: A perfect Christian is one who does whatever God determines to be the most appropriate.

2, 20: As in any house, so in the Church, some utensils are precious (the faithful) and some are cheap (Hymeneus and Philetus?).

2, 21: Although there are the good and the wicked in the Church, the good must separate themselves from the wicked to be useful Christians to the Church.

2, 22: *A pure heart*: see 1 Tm 3, 9 n.

3, 1: *In the last days*: the time immediately preceding the final end. Compare 1 Tm 4, 1 n.

3, 2-5: See Rom 1, 28-31 n on this list of vices.

3, 6: Just as the Christian preachers made many women converts by visiting homes, for oriental women remained home most of the time, so the false teachers followed the same practice (see 1 Tm 2, 11-12 n). *Women*: the author speaks of women who, because of their past sinful lives, feel the need of religion. Yet, since they are not serious about it, they are an easy prey to the false teachers.

7 and led away by various lusts: | ever learning yet never at-
 8 taining knowledge of the truth. Just as Jamnes and Mam-
 bres resisted Moses, so these men also resist the truth;
 for they are corrupt in mind, reprobate as regards the
 9 faith. But they will make no further progress, for their
 folly will be obvious to all, as was that of those others.

10 *Paul's Example and Doctrine* But thou hast closely fol-
 lowed my doctrine, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, my
 11 long-suffering, my love, my patience, | my persecutions, my
 afflictions; such as befell me at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra
 —such persecutions as I suffered, and out of them all the
 12 Lord delivered me. And all who want to live piously in
 13 Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But the wicked and
 impostors will go from bad to worse, erring and leading
 14 into error. But do thou continue in the things that thou
 hast learned and that have been entrusted to thee, knowing
 15 of whom thou hast learned them. For from thy infancy
 thou hast known the Sacred Writings, which are able to
 instruct thee unto salvation by the faith which is in Christ
 16 Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for
 teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for instructing in
 17 justice; | that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for
 every good work.

4

1 *Preach Sound Doctrine* I charge thee, in the sight of God
 and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead
 2 by his coming and by his kingdom, | preach the word, be

3, 8: *Jamnes and Mambres*: the Christians knew these names because, long after Moses, Jewish tradition conferred them on the magicians who opposed the prophet (see Ex 7, 11).

3, 9: *Those others*: there may be an allusion to apocryphal works that narrate the folly of Jamnes and Mambres in their defiance of Moses.

3, 11: See Acts 13—14.

3, 14: *Of whom*: a reference to Paul.

3, 15: *Infancy*: see 1, 5 n. *Sacred Writings*: a common phrase for the Old Testament.

3, 16: *All Scripture is inspired by God and*: another acceptable Greek reading is: "Every Scripture inspired by God is also . . .". Hence, the meaning is: "every biblical passage" which at the time of composition of 2 Tm includes all the recognized, inspired New Testament writings besides the Old Testament. V. 16 is a classic text to show the inspiration of much of the Bible.

4, 1: *The living and the dead*: see 1 Pt 5, 4. "The living" refer to those still living when Christ comes the second and final time.

urgent in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke with
 3 all patience and teaching. For there will come a time when
 they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching
 ears, will heap up to themselves teachers according to their
 4 own lusts, | and they will turn away their hearing from the
 5 truth and turn aside rather to fables. But do thou be watch-
 ful in all things, bear with tribulation patiently, work as
 a preacher of the gospel, fulfill thy ministry.

6 **Reward** As for me, I am already being poured out in
 7 sacrifice, and the time of my deliverance is at hand. I have
 fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept
 8 the faith. For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of jus-
 tice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will give to me in
 that day; yet not to me only, but also to those who love
 his coming.

CONCLUSION

9 **Paul's Loneliness** Make haste to come to me shortly; for
 Demas has deserted me, loving this world, and has gone
 10 to Thessalonica, | Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
 11 | Luke only is with me. Take Mark and bring him with
 12 thee, for he is useful to me for the ministry. But Tychicus

4, 3: *When they will not endure*: when the people will not endure.
Sound doctrine: of Christ. *Having itching ears . . . lusts*: the people
 will have a yearning for fanciful things and, therefore, they will listen
 to teachers who tell them what they want to hear.

4, 4: *Fables*: see I Tm 1, 4 n.

4, 6: *Poured out*: by the metaphor of drink-offering the author
 speaks of his imminent death.

4, 7: *Good fights*: the writer does not flatter himself, he emphasizes
 that in his ministry the fight to preserve the faith was good. See I Tm
 6, 12 n. *Finished the course*: the ministry is compared to a long-
 distance obstacle race. *I have kept the faith*: by obeying and transmit-
 ting it. Some scholars venture this translation: "I have kept the
 pledge," which would refer to an athlete's promise to adhere to the
 rules of the game.

4, 8: *For the rest*: or, "henceforth." *Crown of justice*: not so much
 a reward consisting of justice or righteousness, but a reward given
 in recognition of justice. An allusion is here made to the ceremony
 of crowning the winners, but since a crown symbolized immortality in
 the Greco-Roman world, the inspired author may mean the crown of
 eternal life.

4, 9: *Demas has deserted me*: Demas is mentioned also in Col 4, 14.

4, 10: *Crescens*: otherwise unknown. *Dalmatia*: not mentioned
 elsewhere in the New Testament. Dalmatia lies on the eastern shore
 of the Adriatic Sea.

4, 12: *Tychicus . . . Ephesus*: see Eph 6, 21.

13 I have sent to Ephesus. When thou comest, bring with thee the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus and the
 14 books, especially the parchments. Alexander, the copper-smith, has done me much harm; the Lord will render to
 15 him according to his deeds. Do thou also avoid him for he has vehemently opposed our words.

16 **His Trial** At my first defense no one came to my support, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their charge.
 17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that through me the preaching of the gospel might be completed, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered from
 18 the lion's mouth. The Lord will deliver me from every work of evil, and will preserve me for his heavenly kingdom; to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

19 **Greetings** Greet Prisca and Aquila and the household
 20 of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed at Corinth, but Trophimus
 21 I left sick at Miletus. | Hasten to come before winter. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia and all the brethren greet thee.
 22 | The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

4, 13: *Cloak*: the Greek word may also mean a satchel for the books. *Troas*: an important port in Mysia, on the east coast of the Aegean Sea. *Carpus*: otherwise unknown. *Books*: inexpensive papyri. *Parchments*: expensive writing material. The written contents of these parchments and of the papyri never cease to tantalize the scholars. Yet, the parchments may have been blank but the inspired writer may have wanted them because they were expensive.

4, 16: The writer alludes to Paul's trial or preliminary hearing in Rome. None of the Christians in Rome defended Paul.

4, 17: *All the Gentiles*: a probable reference to Paul's seizing the opportunity to preach the Gospel at the Roman court trial. *The lion's mouth*: probably means a release or a delay of court proceedings.

4, 19: *Prisca and Aquila*: see Acts 18, 2 n. *Onesiphorus*: see 1, 16 n.

4, 20: *Erastus*: the identity of the three persons who bear this name is disputed. In Acts 19, 22, one Erastus is mentioned with Timothy; and Erastus, treasurer of Corinth, is mentioned in Rom 16, 23. *Trophimus* . . . *Miletus*: as usual in the pastorals, it is too difficult to fit this event into the life of Paul as known from Acts and the epistles. According to Acts 20, 15, Paul and Trophimus were together in Miletus but Trophimus did not fall ill and remain behind.

4, 21: All four common proper names are not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. *Eubulus*: unknown even in legends. *Pudens*: legend calls him a Roman senator who was converted by Peter. *Linus*: not all accept as historical that this is the same Linus who became the first successor to Peter in Rome. *Claudia*: legend calls her the mother of Linus.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO TITUS

INTRODUCTION

The New Testament offers only shreds of information on the life of Titus. Oddly enough, he is not even mentioned in Acts.

Titus was a Gentile Christian from Antioch. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the Council of Jerusalem (Gal 2, 1-5). It was Titus who took Paul's "tearful epistle" from Ephesus to Corinth (2 Cor 2, 13). He also delivered the apostle's second canonical epistle to the Corinthians from Macedonia (2 Cor 8, 6).

The scholars who hold that Paul is the author of the epistle to Titus cannot place it in any period of the apostle's life. According to Ti 1, 5, Paul and Titus had worked together in Crete for some time, yet nowhere else is there any mention of a visit of the apostle to Crete. Acts 27, 7f tell only of his stop-over at the island on his way to imprisonment in Rome (60 A.D.). It is unlikely that Paul worked with Titus in Crete before this date. Hence, it is assumed that the apostle returned to Crete after his Roman imprisonment. Shortly after his departure from the island, it is further assumed, he wrote to Titus from Macedonia.

Those who favor the theory that the epistle was written by a pseudonymous author do not trouble to fit this letter into a period of Paul's life. They date it from a time long after his death.

If the scriptures offer but scant information on Titus, they are not more eloquent about the island of Crete. Jews had begun to settle there about 200 B.C. The city of Gortyna is mentioned in 1 Mc 15, 23. The Cretans were all well-known for their expert archery (1 Mc 10, 67), and they were also well known for their mendacity (see Ti 1, 12 n). A prime example was the Cretans' boast of having the tomb of Zeus on the island. (By "Zeus" they actually meant a god of vegetation who was worshiped prior to the Greek era.) Crete was joined to Cyrenaica (North Africa) in 67 B.C. as a Roman province.

For the characteristics common to 1, 2 Tm and Ti see *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 688.

Main divisions of the Epistle to Titus are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-4.
2. Pastoral Charge, 1, 5-16
3. Charge to Teach the Christian Life, 2, 1-3, 11
4. Conclusion, 3, 12-15

INTRODUCTION

1

¹ **Greeting** Paul, a servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the faith of God's elect and the full knowledge of the truth which is according to piety,
² | in the hope of life everlasting which God, who does not
³ lie, promised before the ages began—| he has in due times manifested his word through the preaching committed to
⁴ my trust by the command of God our Savior—to Titus, my beloved son in the common faith: grace and peace from God the Father, and from Christ Jesus our Savior.

I. PASTORAL CHARGE

⁵ **Titus' Mission** For this reason I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set right anything that is defective and shouldst appoint presbyters in every city, as I myself directed thee to
⁶ do. They must be blameless, married but once, having believing children who are not accused of impurity or disobedience. For a bishop must be blameless as being the steward of God, not proud, or ill-tempered, or a drinker, or
⁸ a brawler, or greedy for base gain; | but hospitable, gentle,
⁹ reserved, just, holy, continent; | holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may

1, 1-4: See 1 Tm 1, 1-2 n on the greeting and on "Paul." The greeting to Titus is surprisingly more solemn and complex than that to Timothy (1, 2 Tm).

1, 1: *Servant of God*: the title is un-Pauline, but it may be a variation of the more common Pauline phrase "Servant of Christ Jesus."

1, 5-9: On the interchangeable usage of presbyter (v. 5) and bishop (v. 7) see Acts 20, 17 n.

1, 5: Only this verse tells clearly that Paul empowered Titus to organize the Church in Crete. *Appoint presbyters in every city*: Titus seems to have ordained priests in each community, but the college of priests and not Titus ruled the community.

1, 6: *Married but once*: see 1 Tm 3, 2 n.

1, 7: *The steward of God*: the pastoral epistles often speak of the Church as God's house. *Greedy*: seeking profit from religious services.

1, 9: *Holding fast . . . the teaching*: Titus must be entirely committed to, and convinced of, the true doctrine ("faithful word").

be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to confute opponents.

- ¹⁰ *Special Needs in Crete* For there are also many disobedient, vain babblers and deceivers, especially those of the
¹¹ circumcision. These must be rebuked, for they upset whole households, teaching things that they ought not, for the sake
¹² of base gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."
¹³ | This statement is true. Hence rebuke them sharply that
¹⁴ they may be sound in faith, | and may not listen to Jewish fables and the commandments of men who turn away
¹⁵ from the truth. For the clean all things are clean, but for the defiled and unbelieving nothing is clean; for both
¹⁶ their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their works they disown him, being abominable and unbelieving and worthless for any good work.

1, 10: *Those of the circumcision*: converts from Judaism. This is the first time in the pastorals that the false teachers are clearly referred to as non-converted Jews or Christians of Jewish extraction.

1, 11: *Teaching things that they ought not*: see v. 14.

1, 12: *One of themselves*: a Cretan, and therefore a fellow citizen of the Jewish converts (see 1, 10 n). *A prophet*: not in the sense of an Old Testament prophet but in the derogatory sense of a Caiaphas (Jn 11, 51). "*Cretans . . . gluttons*": the quotation is from the second verse of the poem on Minos by Epimenides of Cnossos in Crete (6th-5th century B.C.). The first part of the verse was quoted by Callimachus of Cyrene (3rd century B.C.) in his *Hymn to Zeus*. Since this quote was current at his time, it cannot be employed to show that the inspired author had a classical training. Implicitly, he says that the quotation applies to the Jewish converts. (See Acts 17, 28 n.)

1, 13: Titus is exhorted to make the Cretans cease from listening to the Jewish converts who have become false teachers.

1, 14: *Jewish fables*: see 1 Tm 1, 4 n. *Commandments of men*: probably a reference to the ascetic practices of the false teachers.

1, 15: *For the clean (or pure) all things are clean*: for those who are morally pure because of interior faith, all things necessary for nourishment are clean since there is no longer the Old Testament distinction between clean and unclean food and drink. *But for the defiled . . . nothing is clean*: what the author just finished saying positively, he now states negatively, namely: for those who are morally defiled through loss of faith, and for the unbelievers, their whole way of living is wrong since their mind and conscience have become defiled by erroneous doctrines.

In modern usage, "to the pure all things are pure" means that a morally pure person need not fear contamination from anything impure. How different this half truth is from the inspired writer's meaning!

II. CHARGE TO TEACH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

2

1 Different Classes But do thou speak what befits the sound
 2 doctrine: | that elderly men be reserved, honorable, prudent,
 3 sound in faith, in love, in patience; | that elderly women,
 in like manner, be marked by holiness of behavior, not
 slanderers, nor enslaved to much wine; teaching what is
 4 right, | that they may train the younger women to be wise,
 5 to love their husbands and their children, | to be discreet,
 chaste, domestic, gentle, obedient to their husbands, so
 6 that the word of God be not reviled. Exhort the younger
 7 men, in like manner, to be self-controlled. Show thyself
 in all things an example of good works, in teaching, in
 8 integrity and dignity; | let thy speech be sound and blame-
 less, so that anyone opposing may be put to shame, having
 9 nothing bad to say of us. Exhort slaves to obey their mas-
 ters, pleasing them in all things and not opposing them;
 10 | not pilfering, but showing faithfulness in all things, so as
 to adorn in all things the teaching of God our Savior.

11 Changed Life For the grace of God our Savior has ap-
 12 peared to all men, | instructing us, in order that, rejecting
 ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live temperately and
 13 justly and piously in this world; | looking for the blessed
 hope and glorious coming of our great God and Savior,

2, 1-10: *Speak what befits the sound doctrine*: in these verses, Titus is charged to teach Christian conduct to the elderly men and women, to the younger men and women, and to the slaves.

2, 2: All these qualities are typical of the pastors.

2, 5: *Domestic*: or, according to another Greek reading, "stayer at home." *Obedient*: another translation may be "submissive." See 1 Tm 2, 11-12 n. *Reviled*: "so that the word of God" (the Gospel) be not discredited.

2, 7-8: *In teaching . . . blameless*: in Greek, "in teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that will be irreproachable."

2, 9-10: Perhaps the underlying thought was this: by showing disobedience to their masters, the Christian slaves might give the Romans the wrong impression that Christianity was a social revolution bent on disturbing the peace in the empire.

2, 11-15: The foundation for the Christian way of life (vv. 1-10) is that God became man and instructed us.

2, 13: The early Christians thought that the second coming was imminent. See 1 Thes 1, 10 n.

- 14 Jesus Christ, | who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and cleanse for himself an
 15 acceptable people, pursuing good works. Thus speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority. Let no one despise thee.

3

- 1 Admonish them to be subject to princes and authorities,
 2 obeying commands, ready for every good work, | speaking evil of none, not quarrelsome but moderate, showing all mildness to all men. For we ourselves also were once unwise, unbelieving, going astray, slaves to various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and
 4 hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness
 5 of God our Savior appeared, | then not by reason of good works that we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us through the bath of regeneration and renewal
 6 by the Holy Spirit; | whom he has abundantly poured out
 7 upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, | in order that, justified by his grace, we may be heirs in the hope of life everlasting.

- 8 *Good Works and Truth* This saying is true, and concerning these things I desire thee to insist, that they who believe in God may be careful to excel in good works. These
 9 things are good and useful to men. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and quarrels and disputes about
 10 the Law; for they are useless and futile. A factious man
 11 avoid after a first and a second admonition, | knowing that such a one is perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

CONCLUSION

- 12 *Closing Messages* When I send Artemas or Tychicus to thee, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis; for there

3, 3: See Rom 1, 28-31 n on the lists of heathen vices.

3, 5: *The bath of regeneration*: baptism. See Mt 19, 28 n.

3, 9: See 1 Tm 1, 4 n.

3, 12: *Artemas*: otherwise not mentioned in the New Testament. "Tradition" makes him one of the seventy-two disciples and the first bishop of Lystra (in present-day Turkey). *Tychicus*: his name is found in four places in the New Testament. See Acts 20, 4. *Nicopolis*: this Adriatic seaport city was made a Roman colony by Augustus in 31 B.C. to commemorate his victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. Before the battle, the army of Augustus camped at Nicopolis.

-
- 13 I have decided to spend the winter. Help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, taking care that nothing be
14 wanting to them. And let our people also learn to excel in good works, in order to meet cases of necessity, that they may not be unfruitful.
- 15 *Greeting* All my companions greet thee. Greet those who love us in the faith. The grace of God be with you all. Amen.

3, 13: *Zenas the lawyer*: otherwise unknown. It is more probable that he was a lawyer of secular law rather than of the Mosaic Law. *Apollos*: he may be the eloquent speaker mentioned several times (e.g., Acts 18, 24).

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION

While Paul was imprisoned for the first time in Rome (see *The Captivity Epistles*, p. 634) he wrote this epistle to Philemon of Colossae. In it he pleads with the wealthy convert to be kind to his runaway slave, Onesimus, and to take him back. On the occasion of sending his messenger, Tychicus, with a letter to the Colossians the apostle sent Onesimus along as a traveling companion (Col 4, 7-9).

Very few scholars have denied Paul's authorship of the epistle to Philemon.

One valuable asset of this epistle is the insight it affords into Paul's kindness and his amiable way of obtaining a favor from a rich friend. Of the greatest value is, perhaps, the view that this letter opens into the early Church's basic attitude toward slavery. Slavery is not condemned as immoral by Paul and the early Christians, nor by any New Testament writer. The time was not yet ripe for a proclamation of freedom. An open clash with the Roman government over its generally accepted customs would have done the early Church more harm than good. The problem of slavery was at that time not a live, social issue (see Gal 3, 28 n). To make the best of the ancient and widespread system of slavery, Paul exhorts the slaves to bear their lot out of a supernatural motive (see Eph 6, 5-8). The apostle implores masters and slaves to live according to charity, not only according to justice. As a result of living Christ's royal law of love (Phlm v. 9) the social problem of slavery would gradually be rectified.

The Epistle to Philemon is often compared with the letter of Pliny the Younger in which he asks Sabinianus, a wealthy pagan friend, to take back a slave.

1 Address and Greeting Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy, to Philemon, our beloved and fellow-worker, | and to Appia, the sister and to Archippus, our fellow-soldier, and to the church that is in thy house: | grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 Philemon's Faith and Charity I give thanks to my God, always making remembrance of thee in my prayers, | as I hear of thy charity and of the faith that thou hast in our Lord Jesus and towards all the saints. May the sharing of thy faith be made evident in full knowledge of all the good that is in you, in Christ Jesus. For I had great joy and consolation in thy charity, because through thee, brother, the hearts of the saints have found rest.

8 Plea for Onesimus For this reason, though I am very confident that I might charge thee in Christ Jesus to do what is fitting, | yet for the sake of charity I prefer to plead, since thou art such as thou art; as Paul, an old man—and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— | I plead with thee for my own son, whom I have begotten in prison, for Onesimus. He once was useless to thee, but now is useful both to me and to thee. I am sending him back to thee, and do thou wel-

1, 1-2: *A prisoner of Jesus Christ*: Paul alludes to his imprisonment, perhaps to make Philemon realize that the favor about to be requested is trifling compared with being imprisoned. *Timothy*: see Acts 16, 1ff on Timothy's life. *Fellow-worker*: to address Philemon thus is justified by his charity toward the Christians, but nothing is known about a collaboration between him and Paul (v. 5). *Appia* . . . *Archippus*: The common surmise, dating from the first centuries, that Appia is Philemon's wife and Archippus their son lacks evidence. *Fellow-soldier*: in Christ's army. *The church*: the faithful.

1, 6: The variety of translations of this verse is due to its obscure textual reading and implied meaning.

1, 8-9: Although Paul feels that as an apostle he could demand Philemon's obeisance, he prefers to plead with him. *An old man*: Paul was probably in his sixties. Some textual critics conjecture that this should read ambassador, not old man.

1, 10: *Whom I have begotten in prison*: while in prison, Paul converted Onesimus.

1, 11: A play on words by Paul, for Onesimus means useful in Greek.

1, 12: Paul does not try to excuse the flight of Onesimus from his master.

The best hypothesis on how the escaped slave met Paul in Rome is this: Onesimus must have frequently heard his master, Philemon,

13 come him as though he were my very heart. I had wanted
 to keep him here with me that in thy stead he might wait
 14 on me in my imprisonment for the gospel; | but I did not
 want to do anything without thy counsel, in order that thy
 kindness might not be as it were of necessity, but voluntary.
 15 Perhaps, indeed, he departed from thee for a short
 16 while so that thou mightest receive him forever, | no
 longer as a slave, but instead of a slave as a brother most
 dear, especially to me, and how much more to thee, both
 17 in the flesh and in the Lord! If, therefore, thou dost count
 18 me as a partner, welcome him as thou wouldst me. And
 if he did thee any injury or owes thee anything, charge
 19 it to me. | I, Paul, write it with my own hand: I will repay
 it—not to say to thee that thou owest me thy very self.
 20 | Yes, indeed, brother! May I, too, make use of thee in the
 Lord! Console my heart in the Lord!

21 *Hopes, Greetings, Blessings* Trusting in thy compliance I
 am writing to thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond
 22 what I say. At the same time make ready a lodging for me
 too, for I hope that through your prayers I shall be restored
 23 to you. Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus,
 24 | Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow-workers,
 25 send thee greetings. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
 with your spirit. Amen.

speak about Paul. So, after the slave arrived in the metropolis, he
 searched for the apostle and finally found him in prison. It is better
 not to try linking the meetings between Paul and Onesimus in prison
 with the latter's arrest and imprisonment as an escaped slave because,
 as a rule, whenever escaped slaves got caught they were not sent to
 prison but immediately returned to their masters.

1, 15-16: Paul suggests that the escape of Onesimus, since it led
 to the slave's conversion, may have been providential.

1, 16: *How much more to thee . . . in the Lord*: the conversion
 of Onesimus should be a joy to Philemon because through it both
 have become related, not only as master and slave ("in the flesh")
 but as fellow Christians ("in the Lord").

1, 18: In addition to the wrong done by his escape, Onesimus may
 have stolen money for his trip.

1, 19: Since Paul converted him, Philemon is indebted to the
 apostle.

1, 20: *Make use*: a humorous allusion to his pun (see 1, 11 n).

1, 21: *Even beyond what I say*: Paul may be making a veiled
 appeal to Philemon to free his slave.

1, 23-24: For the five names, see Col 4. 10-14.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

The prevailing opinion among modern scholars is that Paul did not write this epistle, not even indirectly by giving some ideas to a disciple-secretary. (The title "to the Hebrews" is not in the original; it comes from the end of the second century.) The author had command of a masterly rhetorical style and was thoroughly familiar with the Greek Bible (the Septuagint). His writing bears the hallmark of a knowledge about Christianity that a Jew would have who was educated in Hellenistic circles outside of Palestine. According to the best conjecture, the author is Apollos, the eloquent, cultured Jew from Alexandria (Acts 18, 24f).

The opinions concerning the date of the writing are influenced by the position held on authenticity. The commentators who want to retain some link with Paul would tend to date the epistle from 64 to 67; those who discount Paul altogether, tend to date it from the late seventies to about 90 A.D. (In 95 A.D., this letter was used in the first epistle of St. Clement.)

The inspired author takes up his quill in Rome or some place in Italy (13, 24) to encourage his readers who were in the throes of some kind of persecution and danger to their faith. There are about six passages of warnings against apostasy. Even though the identity of the readers is still an open question, the present trend favors the view that they were Christians converted from Judaism. This view is based on the strong Jewish contents of the letter. These Jewish Christians were living in one or several communities (13, 23) in Jerusalem, Palestine, or outside of Palestine.

On the literary form of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is a variety of opinions. The homiletic form is favored by many. Regardless of the opinion, the doctrine remains unaffected. It pivots on the priesthood of Christ who is the superior mediator of a new covenant and sacrifice.

Main divisions of the Epistle to the Hebrews are:

Superiority of the New over the Old Dispensation

1. A Superior Mediator, 1, 1—4, 13
2. A Superior High Priest, 4, 14—7, 28
3. A Superior Covenant, 8, 1-13
4. A Superior Sacrifice, 9, 1—10, 18

Exhortations

5. To Perseverance in Faith, 10, 19—11, 40
6. Other Virtues, 12, 1—13, 17
7. Conclusion, 13, 18-25

I. SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW DISPENSATION OVER THE OLD

I. A SUPERIOR MEDIATOR

1

- ¹ *Christ Superior to the Angels* God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers
² by the prophets, | last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom
³ also he made the world; | who, being the brightness of his glory and the image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, has effected man's purgation from sin and taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty
⁴ on high, | having become so much superior to the angels
⁵ as he has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels has he ever said, "Thou art my son, I this day have begotten thee"? and again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?
⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "And let all the angels of God adore him."
⁷ And of the angels indeed he says, "He makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

1, 1: *At sundry times*: the Greek means "fragmentarily." *The fathers*: Jewish ancestors.

1, 2: *In these days*: in Messianic times. *By his Son*: literally, "in a son." *By whom also he made the world*: see Jn 1, 3 n.

1, 3: Compare Col 1, 15. *The brightness of his glory*: a splendidly apt expression. *Upholding*: see Col 1, 17 on Jesus as the conservator of creation. *Purgation from sin*: through the redemption.

1, 4: *Name*: nature.

1, 5-14: The superiority of Christ over the angels (v. 4) is shown through a rereading of scripture in the light of Christ and in the light of events that happened in New Testament times.

1, 5: What was originally said of a Hebrew king (see Ps 2, 7 n) and to Solomon (see 2 Sm 7, 14) is here said of Christ. Thus the inspired author expresses his faith in Christ's divinity.

1, 6: *The firstborn*: although many scholars interpret this as a reference to Christ's birth or second coming, "firstborn" may refer to Christ's enthronement among the angels (Ps 96, 7) in heaven (in Greek, "world" means "the inhabited earth" which may mean heaven).

1, 7: To show that Christ is superior to the angels, the author quotes Ps 103, 4 according to the Greek text wherein angels are spoken of. (The Hebrew text does not speak of angels.) The inspired writer stresses Christ's superiority by implying that God can change angels into winds ("spirits") and lightning ("a flame of fire").

- 8 But of the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever and a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
 9 Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
 10 And, "Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the
 11 earth, and the heavens are works of thy hands. | They shall perish, but thou shalt continue; and they shall all grow old
 12 as does a garment, | and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 13 Now to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet"?
 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation?

2

- 1 *Warning and Exhortation* Therefore ought we the more earnestly to observe the things that we have heard, lest perhaps we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, | how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by those who
 4 heard him; | God also, according to his own will, bearing them witness by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by impartings of the Holy Spirit.

1, 8-9: What was originally said of a Hebrew monarch (Ps 44, 7-8), is here said of Christ. Thus the author expresses his faith in Christ's divinity.

1, 10-12: The words of Ps 101, 26-28, originally said of God, are applied to Christ. Thus the author of this epistle expresses his belief in Christ's divinity.

1, 13: See Ps 109, 1-7 n.

1, 14: The conclusion of vv. 5-13 is that the angels are inferior to Christ and to the Christians at whose service they are placed to help them attain salvation.

2, 1-3: Since those who disobeyed the Mosaic Law were so severely punished, how much more will they be punished who disobey the law of Christ?

2, 2: *The word: the Mosaic Law. Spoken by angels:* see Gal 3, 19 n.

2, 4: *Signs . . . Holy Spirit:* the miracles that occurred, and the charismatic gifts that were given at and after Pentecost. The New Testament writers are profuse in their amazement at these wonders.

5 Christ Suffered for His Brethren For he has not subjected to angels the world to come, whereof we speak. Rather someone has testified somewhere, saying "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? | Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; | thou hast put all things under his feet."

For in subjecting all things to man, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not see as yet all things subject to him. But we do see him who was made "a little lower than the angels," namely, Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of his having suffered death, that by the grace of God he might taste death for all. For it became him for whom are all things and through whom are all things, who had brought many sons into glory, to perfect through sufferings the author of their salvation. For both he who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all from one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, | "I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the church I will praise thee."

2, 5-9: God promised the Messianic kingdom to Jesus, not to the angels.

2, 5: *He*: God. *The world to come*: the Church on earth from the time of the inspired writer till its eternal state of glory in heaven.

2, 6-8a: It is shown here from Ps 8, 5 6 that God promised universal reign to Christ. (Literally, the psalm spoke of man's eminent position in creation.)

2, 6: *Someone*: the unconcern for the Old Testament author may bespeak an elevated notion of inspiration—no matter who the human writer may have been, God is the author.

2, 7: *A little lower*: the meaning may also be: "for a little while lower."

2, 8b-9: Although man himself does not rule the world, he rules it through his representative, Jesus, whose complete domination will occur at the end of the world.

2, 10: *Who had brought many sons into glory*: perhaps a better translation is, "who had many sons to bring to glory." It was because of God's will to save men that Jesus saved them through his sufferings. *To perfect*: Christ was "perfected" through all the sufferings entailed throughout his life on earth in being the perfect mediator, in making the offering of the greatest sacrifice to God, and in the practice of many virtues.

2, 11: *He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified . . . from one*: Jesus who sanctifies and the Christians who are sanctified come from God to form one family. *He is not ashamed*: Christ is not ashamed to call us his brothers. The union between Christ and Christians is illustrated by quotations from Ps 21, 23; Is 8, 17f.

- 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again
 "Behold, I and my children whom God has given me."
 14 Therefore because children have blood and flesh in com-
 mon, so he in like manner has shared in these; tha-
 through death he might destroy him who had the empire
 15 of death, that is, the devil; | and might deliver them, who
 throughout their life were kept in servitude by the fear
 16 of death. For, of course, it is not angels that he is succor-
 17 ing; but he is succoring the offspring of Abraham. Where-
 fore it was right that he should in all things be made
 like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful
 and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins
 18 of the people. For in that he himself has suffered and has
 been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted

3

- 1 *Christ Superior to Moses* Therefore, holy brethren, par-
 takers of a heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high
 2 priest of our confession, Jesus, | who is faithful to him who
 3 made him, as was Moses also "in all his house." For he was
 deemed worthy of greater glory than Moses, just as the
 builder of a house has greater honor than the house that
 4 he has built. For every house is built by someone; but he
 5 who created all things is God. And Moses indeed was
 faithful "in all his house" as a servant, to testify concerning

2, 14: *Blood and flesh*: human nature. *Empire of death . . . devil*: the devil precipitated man's corporal (Gn 3, 2-3) and spiritual death.

2, 15: Before Christ came into the world, death was more often feared as a gateway to hell than to heaven. The abundant spiritual means that Christ brought to help men attain heaven has lessened this fear.

2, 16: *The offspring of Abraham*: this expression is readily understandable if Jewish Christians have been the recipients of the epistle. Regardless, the expression is used for Christians, but it underscores the promises made to Abraham.

2, 17: *Merciful*: sympathetic with the sufferings of men (see v. 18). *Faithful*: see ch. 3. *High priest*: the first mention of the priesthood, the principal theme of this letter.

2, 18: *Tempted*: the temptation refers principally to acceptance of the passion and death rather than to the temptation of Jesus in the desert.

3, 1: *Holy brethren*: a rare title (see 1 Thes 5, 27).

3, 2: See Nm 12, 7: "Throughout my (God's) house he (Moses) bears my trust."

3, 5: *Those things that were to be spoken*: in the name of God for whom Moses spoke.

6 those things that were to be spoken; | but Christ is faithful as the Son over his own house. We are that house, if we hold fast our confidence and the hopes in which we glory unto the end.

7.8 **Exhortation** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you shall hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation, during the day of temptation in the desert, 9 | where your fathers tried me, proved and saw my works 10 | forty years. Wherefore I was offended with this generation, and said, 'They always err in heart, and they have not known 11 my ways.' As I have sworn in my wrath, they shall not enter into my Rest."

12 Take heed, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that would turn away from the 13 living God. But exhort one another every day, while it is still Today, that none of you be hardened by the deceitful- 14 ness of sin. For we have been made partakers of Christ, provided only that we hold fast our first confidence in 15 him unto the end. While it is said, "Today if you shall hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in that 16 provocation"—| for some who heard gave provocation, but 17 not all those who came out of Egypt under Moses—with whom then was he offended forty years? Was it not with

3, 6: *House*: the Church. *The hope in which we glory*: literally, "the glory of hope." *Unto the end*: a probable gloss from v. 14.

3, 7-11: These verses recall the psalmist's (Ps 94, 8-11) exhortation to the Israelites not to imitate the disobedience of their ancestors when they tempted God by doubting his power and goodness (Ex 17, 1-7).

3, 10: *Forty years*: in the Hebrew and Greek texts, "forty years" is connected with, "I was offended," i.e., God was offended for forty years. Here, the text is used to mean that God was "tempted" (exasperated) while he performed wonders for forty years. This usage of the text emphasizes the long period of God's goodness and the people's obstinacy.

3, 12-13: A warning against imitation of the incredulity of their ancestors.

3, 13: *Today*: the "today" of the psalmist (v. 7) is here applied to "every day" of life on earth while God warns Christians against sin.

3, 14: Compare Rom 8, 17.

3, 15-18: In an eloquent repetition, the inspired author emphasizes the sin of unbelief.

3, 16: In Greek, "Who were they, who having heard, remained in rebellion? Were they not all those who were led out of Egypt by Moses?"

3, 17: See Nm 14, 29.

18 those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the desert? And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his Rest but to those who were unbelieving? And we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4

1 ***Our Promised Land*** Let us therefore fear lest perhaps while the promise of entering into his Rest remains, any
2 of you should be thought wanting. For to us also it has been declared, just as to them. But the word that was heard did not profit them, since they had no faith in what they
3 heard. We then who have believed shall enter into his Rest, even as he said, "As I have sworn in my wrath, they shall not enter into my Rest."

And indeed his works were completed at the foundation
4 of the world. For somewhere he spoke of the seventh day thus, "And God rested the seventh day from all his works";
5 | and in this place again, "They shall not enter into my Rest."
6 Since then it follows that some are to enter into it, and they to whom it was first declared did not enter in because
7 of unbelief, | he again fixes another day to be Today, saying by David after so long a time, as quoted above, "Today if you shall hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."
8 For if Josue had given them rest, God would never after-
9 wards be speaking of another day. There remains therefore

3, 18: See Nm 14, 23.

4, 1: *Rest*: eternal rest with God in heaven (see Ps 94, 11 n).

4, 2: In Greek, "For we too have heard the good news preached to us just as they heard it. But the word they heard was of no profit to them because they did not mingle it with faith." There are many conjectures on the exact Greek wording, but the general sense is clear.

4, 3: *Shall enter*: in Greek, "are entering." In the quoted Ps 94, 11 the words "my Rest" probably mean the unending Sabbath rest after the work of creation described in Gn 2, 2 (cited in v. 4). This "Sabbath rest" has the same meaning as eternal rest (see 4, 1 n); it does not mean the "rest" in the Promised Land of Chanaan.

4, 5-7: Continuing the notion of the rest (see 4, 3 n), the verses explain that according to Ps 94, 11 not only some ancestors failed to enter God's promised rest but that later, at the time of David, other ancestors failed to enter God's promised rest because they did not listen to his warnings of "today" (see 3, 13 n).

4, 8: If the Israelites in the days of Moses and Josue had believed and entered the rest of Chanaan, they also would have received the true unending Sabbath rest (see 4, 3 n). Consequently, God would not have repeated the offer of his rest (v. 7).

4, 9: *A Sabbath Rest*: the eternal rest with God in heaven.

- 10 a Sabbath Rest for the people of God. For he who has entered into his Rest, has himself also rested from his own
11 works, even as God did from his. Let us therefore hasten to enter into that Rest, lest anyone fall by following the same
12 example of unbelief. For the word of God is living and efficient and keener than any two-edged sword, and extending even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints also and of marrow, and a discernor of the thoughts and
13 intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we have to give account.

II. A SUPERIOR HIGH PRIEST

- 14 *Confidence in Christ* Having therefore a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,
15 let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one
16 tried as we are in all things except sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5

- 1 *Christ the High Priest* For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things pertaining
2 to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and erring, because
3 he himself also is beset with weakness, and by reason thereof is obliged to offer for sins, as on behalf of the
4 people, so also for himself. And no man takes the honor to himself; he takes it who is called by God, as Aaron

4, 10: *For he*: for Jesus.

4, 12: God's word is personified as his messenger. *Two-edged sword*: see Ap 1, 16 n and Is 49, 2 n.

4, 14: Harking back to 2, 17—3, 1, Jesus in his office as high priest is presented as a motive for perseverance.

4, 16: *The throne of grace*: at the throne of God's grace.

5, 1-4: This majestic description of the Jewish high priest has become classical and applicable to every priest.

5, 3: *So also for himself*: especially on the day of expiation, the high priest offered sacrifices for himself and his family (Lv 16, 6). The *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* in the daily Mass, the prayer especially for the celebrant and assistants, is an extrabiblical counterpart.

5, 4: *Aaron*: see Ex 28. 1.

- 5 was. So also Christ did not glorify himself with the high priesthood, but he who spoke to him, "Thou art my son. I this day have begotten thee."
- 6 As he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech."
- 7 For Jesus, in the days of his earthly life, with a loud cry and tears, offered up prayers and supplications to him who was able to save him from death, and was heard because of his reverent submission. And he, though he was learned obedience from the things that he suffered; | and when perfected, he became to all who obey him the cause of eternal salvation, | called by God a high priest according to the order of Melchisedech.
- 11 *Importance of the Doctrine* On this point we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain it, because you have grown dull of hearing. For whereas by this time you ought to be masters, you need to be taught again the rudiments of the words of God; and you have become such as have need of milk and not of solid food. For everyone who is fed on milk is unskilled in the word of justice; he is but a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who by practice have their faculties trained to discern good and evil.

6

- 1 *An Appeal for Progress* Therefore, leaving the elementary teaching concerning Christ, let us pass on to things more perfect, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, | of the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands, of the resur-

5, 5-10: The prerequisites of a true priest are found in Christ.

5, 5: Ps 2, 7 seems to be quoted here to mean that God calls Christ to the priesthood. See Ps 2, 7 n for the original meaning, and Acts 13, 33 n for Paul's use of this text.

5, 6: See Ps 109, 4 n.

5, 7: Generally interpreted as an allusion to the agony in Gethsemani (Lk 22, 41-44).

5, 8: See Mt 26, 37-39 n.

5, 12: *Milk . . . not solid food*: compare 1 Cor 3, 2.

6, 1-2: The inspired author wants to expose a doctrine beyond the basic truths of which he names six. *Dead works*: deeds arising from one in the state of sin.

6, 2: *The doctrine of baptisms*: the doctrine on the difference among the variety of baptisms that were then in vogue, especially the difference between Christian baptism and that of John the Baptist (see Mt 3, 2 n). *The laying on of hands*: it is generally agreed that the

3 rection of the dead and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits.

4 **Danger of Apostasy** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, who have both tasted the heavenly
5 gift and become partakers of the Holy Spirit, | who have moreover tasted the good word of God and the powers of the
6 world to come, | and then have fallen away, to be renewed again to repentance; since they crucify again for themselves
7 the Son of God and make him a mockery. For the earth that drinks in the rain that often falls upon it, and produces vegetation that is of use to those by whom it is tilled, re-
8 ceives a blessing from God; | but that which brings forth thorns and thistles is worthless, and is nigh unto a curse, and its end is to be burnt.

9 **Expectation of Better Things** But in your case, beloved, we are confident of better things, things that promise salva-
10 tion, even though we speak thus. For God is not unjust, that he should forget your work and the love that you have shown in his name, you who have ministered and do minister
11 to the saints. But we want every one of you to show to the very end the same earnestness for the fulfillment of your
12 hopes; | so that you may become not sluggish but imitators of those who by faith and patience will inherit the promises.

accompaniment of the rite by the imparting of the Holy Spirit is meant here. The preferable view among scholars, however, is that the author refers to baptism rather than to confirmation.

6, 4-6: An exaggerated exhortatory warning that it is "impossible" for an apostate to return to the faith (but the inspired author does not refer to a particular apostate who asks for readmission).

6, 4: *Impossible*: in spite of the clear reading in the Greek, the correctors of some Latin manuscripts changed the word from "impossible" to "difficult." This tampering with the text was their reply to heretics who interpreted it to mean the impossibility of pardoning mortal sins. *Enlightened*: converted or "baptized." *Tasted the heavenly gift*: the gift of redemption or the Holy Eucharist. *Partakers of the Holy Spirit*: sacraments and charismatic gifts are meant.

6, 5: *The good word*: probably the Gospel. *The powers of the world to come*: the supernatural workings and gifts of the Holy Spirit (see 2, 4 n) that begin on earth and endure throughout the Messianic era. These "powers" give a foretaste of heaven.

6, 6: *Make him a mockery*: by apostasy.

6, 7-8: Apostates are not like the earth that receives God's blessing and produces fruit; these people resemble more the earth that was cursed (Gn 3, 17) and destined for burning (Mt 13, 30).

6, 12: *Faith*: note the other two theological virtues of charity (v. 10) and hope (v. 11).

- 13 ***Certainty of God's Promise*** For when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, | saying, "I will surely bless thee and I will surely multiply thee."
- 14 And thus after patient waiting, Abraham obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath given as a guarantee is the final settlement of all their disagreement. Hence God, meaning to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his will, interposed an oath, | that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to deceive, we may have the strongest comfort—we who have sought refuge in holding fast the hope set before us. This hope we have, as a sure and firm anchor of the soul, reaching even behind the veil | where our forerunner Jesus has entered for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.

7

- 1 ***Melchisedech More Than Abraham*** For this Melchisedech was king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; | to whom Abraham divided the tithes of all. First, as his name shows, he is King of Justice, and then also he is King of Salem, that is, King of Peace. Without

6, 14: See Gn 22, 16.

6, 15: *The promise*: of posterity.

6, 17: *The heirs of the promise*: the Christians. In retrospect, the author says: Abraham was promised the same joys of heaven that Christians hope to possess after death.

6, 18: *Two unchangeable things*: the promise of the Messianic blessing made to Abraham (vv. 13-14) was guaranteed by God's word and oath.

6, 19: The "anchor" symbolized hope for the Greek moralists, and in the Roman catacombs. *The veil*: of heaven. The metaphor comes from the veil separating the Holy from the Holy of Holies (Lv 16, 2).

7, 1-28: The Christians are warned not to apostatize by surrendering Christ's priesthood and by returning to the priesthood of Aaron. With an argument, not necessarily appealing to moderns, the inspired writer explains that even in the Old Testament the priesthood of the pagan Melchisedech was superior to that of Aaron insofar as Melchisedech was a type of Christ's priesthood (see 6, 3 n.).

7, 1-2: Melchisedech, when he met Abraham returning from a military victory, blessed him and received from him a tenth part of the booty. (See Gn 14, 18-24 n.)

7, 2: Melchisedech means "King of Justice;" Salem means "Peace."

7, 3: Melchisedech is otherwise only mentioned in Gn 14, 18-20,

father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened to the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.

4 Melchisedech More Than Levi Now consider how great this man is, to whom even Abraham the patriarch gave
5 tithes out of the best portions of the spoils. And indeed they who are of the priestly sons of Levi, have a commandment to take tithes from the people according to the Law, that is, from their brethren, though these also have come from the
6 loins of Abraham. But he whose genealogy is not recorded among them received tithes of Abraham and blessed him who
7 had the promises. Now beyond all contradiction, that which
8 is less is blessed by the superior. And in the one case indeed, mortal men receive tithes, while in the other, it is one of
9 whom it is testified that he lives on. And even Levi, the receiver of tithes, was also, so to speak, through Abraham
10 made subject to tithes, | for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchisedech met him.

11 Levitical Priesthood Imperfect If then perfection was by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need was there that another priest should rise, according to the order of Melchisedech, and said not

Ps 109, 4 and in passages that refer to this verse. There is no information in scripture on the birth, death, and genealogy of Melchisedech. Therefore, the author of this epistle, by literary fiction, calls Melchisedech an *eternal* priest and, hence, a type of Christ the *eternal* priest. Surprisingly, the author does not say that Melchisedech's offering of bread and wine is a type of Christ's sacrifice of himself under the species of bread and wine at the Last Supper (see Gn 14, 18-24 n).

7, 4: See 7, 1-2 n.

7, 5-6: The Levitical priests received tithes from the Israelites even though the latter enjoyed the privilege of their descent from Abraham. But Melchisedech, who was neither an Israelite nor a Levite, enjoyed the great privilege of receiving tithes from Abraham, the pre-eminent patriarch. The author is stretching the meaning of booty (see 7, 1-2 n). Besides, Melchisedech blesses Abraham.

7, 8: The Levitical priests were mortal; Melchisedech was "eternal" (see 7, 3 n).

7, 9-10: Melchisedech is superior to Abraham and to the Levitical priests who were in Abraham's loins as future descendants.

7, 11: *Perfection*: the Levitical priests or "the order of Aaron" were not perfect because they did not have the God-given power to cleanse the consciences of the people. Had the Levitical priesthood been "perfect," there would have been no need for another law and priest, Christ, who is a priest "according to the order of Melchisedech" (see Ps 109, 4 n).

12 to be according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, it is necessary that a change of law |
 13 made also. For he of whom these things are said is from another tribe, from which no one has ever done service |
 14 the altar. For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Juda; and Moses spoke nothing at all about priests when referring to this tribe. And it is yet far more evident if there arise another priest, according to the likeness of Melchisedech |
 16 | who has become so not according to the Law of carnal commandment, but according to a life that cannot end. For it is testified of him, "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech."

18 *Superseded by Priesthood of Christ* On the one hand there is the rejection of the former commandment, because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the Law brought nothing to perfection), and on the other hand a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

20 *A Priest by Divine Oath* And inasmuch as it is not without an oath (for the others indeed were made priests without an oath, | but he with an oath through him who said to him, "The Lord has sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever"), | all the more has Jesus become surety of a superior covenant. And the other priests indeed were numerous, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; | but he, because he continues forever, has an everlasting priesthood. Therefore he is able at all times to save those who come to God through him, since he lives always to make intercession for them.

26 *Sinless and Perfect* For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from

7, 13-14: The descendants from the tribe of Juda, from whom Jesus came, were not priests.

7, 15-16: Jesus was a priest like Melchisedech. Neither Christ nor Melchisedech inherited the priesthood through "carnal" descent, because they were "eternal" (see 7, 3 n).

7, 17: See Ps 109, 4 n.

7, 18: The Levitical priesthood, like the Mosaic Law, proved imperfect (see 7, 11 n).

7, 19: *A better hope*: Christ, "through which we draw near to God" as explained in 6, 18-20.

7, 20-21: The proclamation of Jesus as priest includes an oath (Ps 109, 4); the Levitical priests were proclaimed priests without an oath and therefore were inferior.

- 27 sinners, and become higher than the heavens. He does not need to offer sacrifices daily (as the other priests did), first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for
 28 this latter he did once for all in offering up himself. For the Law appoints as priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son who is forever perfect.

III. A SUPERIOR COVENANT

8

- 1 *Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary* Now the main point in what we are saying is this. We have such a high priest, who has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of
 2 Majesty in the heavens, | a minister of the Holies, and of the
 3 true tabernacle, which the Lord has erected and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is necessary that this one also should have some-
 4 thing to offer. If then he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there are already others to offer gifts ac-
 5 cording to the Law. The worship they offer is a mere copy and shadow of things heavenly, even as Moses was warned when he was completing the tabernacle: "See," God said, "that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee on the mount."

- 6 *Mediator of a Superior Covenant* But now he has obtained a superior ministry, in proportion as he is mediator of a superior covenant, enacted on the basis of superior promises.
 7 For had the first been faultless, place would not of course be
 8 sought for a second. For finding fault with them he says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house
 9 of Juda, | not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they did not

7, 27: Christ does not offer daily sacrifice in the sanctuary of heaven. *This latter*: the offering of sacrifice.

7, 28: *Law*: the Mosaic Law.

8, 1-5: Christ's priesthood is superior to that of the Levitical priests because he officiates in heaven.

8, 5: See Ex 25, 40.

8, 6-13: Christ's priesthood is superior because he is the mediator of a new alliance.

8, 8-12: See Jer 31, 31-34.

abide by my covenant, and I did not regard them, says the Lord.

- 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and upon their hearts I will write them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
 11 And they shall not teach, each his neighbor, and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord'; for all shall know me, from
 12 least to greatest among them. | Because I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more."
 13 Now in saying "a new covenant," he has made obsolete the former one; and that which is obsolete and has grown old is near its end.

IV. A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE

9

1 *The Earthly Sanctuary* The first covenant also had ritual
 2 ordinances and a sanctuary, though an earthly one. For there was set up a tabernacle in the outer part of which were the lamp-stand and the table and the showbread, and this is called
 3 the Holy Place; | but beyond the second veil was the tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, | having a golden
 4 censer and the ark of the covenant, overlaid on every side with gold. In the ark was a golden pot containing the manna and the rod of Aaron which had budded, and the tablets
 5 of the covenant; | and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat. But of all these we cannot now speak in detail.

6 *A Type of the Heavenly Sanctuary* Such then being the arrangements, the priests always used to enter into the first
 7 tabernacle to perform the sacred rites; | but into the second tabernacle the high priest alone entered once a year, not without blood, which he offered for his own and the people's sins
 8 of ignorance. The Holy Spirit signified by this that the way

9, 1-5: A description of the tabernacle of Moses in the desert.

9, 4: *Censer*: the Greek word can also mean "altar." The altar of incense is placed inside instead of outside of the Holy of Holies. *Tablets*: according to 3 Kgs 8, 9, only the tablets were in the Ark.

9, 7: See Ex 25, 16-22.

9, 8-10: Just as the priests, who represented the people, were sealed off from the Holy of Holies, so were they sealed off from heaven.

9, 8: *The Holy Spirit signified*: the author attributes the entire explanation of the ceremony to the Holy Spirit, for the "author" of

into the Holies was not yet thrown open while the first tabernacle was still standing. This first tabernacle is a figure of the present time, inasmuch as gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshipper in conscience, since they refer only to food and drink | and various ablutions and bodily regulations imposed until a time of reformation.

11 *Christ the High Priest and Victim* But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things to come, he entered once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not of this creation), | nor again by virtue of blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of his own blood, into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer sanctify the unclean unto the cleansing of the flesh, | how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered himself unblemished unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 *Redemption through Christ* And this is why he is mediator of a new covenant, that whereas a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the former covenant, they who have been called may receive eternal inheritance according to the promise. For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must intervene; | for a testament is valid only when men are dead, otherwise it has as yet no force as long as the testator is alive.

18 *The Blood of Victims* Hence not even the first has been inaugurated without blood; | for when every commandment of

the liturgical rites as well as of the written records about them in scripture is the Holy Spirit.

9, 9: *Sacrifices . . . cannot perfect*: see 7, 11 n.

9, 11: *More perfect tabernacle*: heaven.

9, 13: *Sanctify the unclean*: the verse does not speak about a spiritual internal sanctification, but of an external legal purification (Nm 20).

9, 14: *Through the Holy Spirit*: in Greek, "through the eternal spirit." *Dead works*: see 6, 1-2 n.

9, 15: *He*: Christ: *Death*: Christ's death on the cross. *Former covenant*: of Sinai. The Hebrew word for covenant is *berith*. It was translated in Greek as *diatheke*, which in turn was rendered in the English translation as covenant and testament (in vv. 15-17). The meaning is that the new covenant was a testament in the sense that it did not become valid till the testator (Jesus) had died. *Promise*: all the Messianic blessings implied in the promise made to Abraham.

the Law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves and of the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, | "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded for you."

21 The tabernacle also and all the vessels of the ministry have been
22 sprinkled likewise with blood; | and with blood almost everything is cleansed according to the Law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23 *The Blood of Christ* It was necessary, therefore, that the copies of the heavenly realities should be cleansed by these things; but the heavenly realities themselves require better
24 sacrifices than these. For Jesus has not entered into a Holies made by hands, a mere copy of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God on our behalf;
25 | nor yet has he entered to offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the Holies year after year with
26 blood not his own; | for in that case he must have suffered often since the beginning of the world. But as it is, once for all at the end of the ages, he has appeared for the
27 destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed unto men to die once and after this comes
28 the judgment, | so also was Christ offered once to take away the sins of many; the second time with no part in sin he will appear unto the salvation of those who await him.

10

1 *One Sacrifice Supplants Many* For the Law, having but a shadow of the good things to come, and not the exact image of the objects, is never able by the sacrifices which they offer continually, year after year the same, to perfect
2 those who draw near; | for in that case would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, once cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sin?

9, 20: See Ex 24, 3-8.

9, 22: *Forgiveness*: legal pardon.

9, 23-24: Animal sacrifices were sufficient for the liturgical cleansing of an earthly sanctuary, but access to the heavenly sanctuary requires "better sacrifices," i.e., the sacrifice of Christ (v. 26).

9, 25: *Blood not his own*: with blood of animals.

9, 26: *The end of the ages*: the Messianic age between the first and second coming of Christ.

- 3 Yet in these sacrifices sins are brought to remembrance year
 4 by year. For it is impossible that sins should be taken away
 5 with blood of bulls and of goats. Therefore in coming into
 the world, he says, "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not,
 6 but a body thou hast fitted to me: | in holocausts and sin-
 offerings thou hast had no pleasure.
 7 "Then said I, 'Behold, I come—(in the head of the book
 it is written of me)—to do thy will, O God.' "
 8 In saying in the first place, "Sacrifices and oblations and
 holocausts and sin-offerings thou wouldst not, neither hast
 thou had pleasure in them" (which are offered according
 9 to the Law), | and then saying, "Behold, I come to do thy
 will, O God," he annuls the first covenant in order to
 10 establish the second. It is in this "will" that we have been
 sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
 once for all.
- 11 *Its Eternal Efficacy* And every priest indeed stands daily
 ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices, which
 12 can never take away sins; | but Jesus, having offered one
 sacrifice for sins, has taken his seat forever at the right
 13 hand of God, | waiting thenceforth until his enemies be
 14 made the footstool under his feet. For by one offering he has
 15 perfected forever those who are sanctified. Thus also the
 16 Holy Spirit testifies unto us. For after having said, "This
 is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,
 says the Lord: I will put my laws upon their hearts, and
 17 upon their minds I will write them," he then adds, | "And
 their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more."
 18 Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer
 offering for sin.

10, 5-7: See Ps 39, 7-9 n.

10, 13: A reference to Ps 109, 1.

10, 16: See 8, 10 where Jer 31, 33 is also quoted.

10, 17: See 8, 12 where Jer 31, 34 is also quoted.

10, 18: Since man's sins have been forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, there is no longer any need for another sacrifice. Many Protestants deduce from this verse that the sacrifice of the Mass is useless. Catholics retain the teaching that there is only one sacrifice of Christ but the Mass re-presents or commemorates Christ's one sacrifice because of his command, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22, 19).

II. EXHORTATIONS

I. TO PERSEVERANCE IN FAITH

19 *First Motive: the Judgment* Since then, brethren, we are free to enter the Holies in virtue of the blood of Christ, 20 | a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through 21 the veil (that is, his flesh), | and since we have a high 22 priest over the house of God, | let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience by sprinkling, and the body 23 washed with clean water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has given the 24 promise is faithful. And let us consider how to arouse one 25 another to charity and good works; | not forsaking our assembly as is the custom of some, but exhorting one another, and this all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

26 *Guilt of Apostasy* For if we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice 27 for sins, | but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and "the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." 28 A man making void the Law of Moses dies without any mercy 29 on the word of two or three witnesses; | how much worse punishments do you think he deserves who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant through which he was sanctified, 30 and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who has said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."

10, 19: *To enter the Holies*: symbolic for: to enter heaven.

10, 20: *Veil . . . flesh*: compare Mt 27, 51.

10, 21: *House of God*: see 3, 2-6.

10, 22: *Draw near*: to worship God. *Cleansed . . . by sprinkling . . . clean water*: according to many, this is a reference to baptism.

10, 23: *Our hope*: Christ. *For he . . . is faithful*: God.

10, 25: *Custom of some*: apostates. *The Day*: of Christ's second coming.

10, 26: *If we sin willfully*: for those who apostatize and remain obdurate, Christ's sacrifice will be ineffective (see 6, 4-6 n).

10, 27: A probable partial quote from Is 26, 11 or So 18, 1.

10, 28-29: If the Mosaic Law (Dt 17, 2-6) punished deliberate sinners by death, how much worse will be the punishment for a rejection of the new law?

10, 30: Compare Rom 12, 19 n.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 **Second Motive: Trials Well Borne** But call to mind the days gone by, in which, after you had been enlightened,

33 you endured a great conflict of sufferings; | partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by making common cause with those who fared

34 thus. For you both have had compassion on those in prison and have joyfully accepted the plundering of your own goods, knowing that you have a better possession and a

35 lasting one. Do not, therefore, lose your confidence, which

36 has a great reward. For you have need of patience that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 "For yet a very little while, and he who is to come, will

38 come, and will not delay. | Now my just one lives by faith.

But if he draws back, he will not please my soul."

39 We, however, are not of those who draw back unto destruction, but of those who have faith to the saving of the soul.

11

1 **Third Motive: Old Testament Examples** Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things

2 that are not seen; | for by it the men of old had testimony

3 borne to them. By faith we understand that the world was fashioned by the word of God; and thus things visible were made out of things invisible.

4 **Abel** By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice more excellent than did Cain, through which he obtained a testimony that he was just, God giving testimony to his gifts; and through his faith, though he is dead, he yet speaks.

10, 32: *Enlightened*: see 6, 4 n.

10, 37-38: See Hb 2, 3.

11, 1-3: This classic text is a description of faith as practiced by the patriarchs. The most disputed word is here translated "substance" (in Greek, *hypostasis*). Besides, the phrase "things to be hoped for" should read "things hoped for." One explanation of the phrase is: faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen (v. 1). God praised the patriarchs for their faith in his promises (v. 2).

11, 3: According to the common opinion, this verse means that the creation of the world is known through faith. It is difficult to see the connection between this verse and the faith of the patriarchs.

11, 4: See Gn 4, 4-8.

- 5 *Henoch*** By faith Henoch was taken up lest he should see death; and he was not found, because God took him up. For before he was taken up he had testimony that he
- 6** pleased God, | and without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that God exists and is a rewarder to those who seek him.
- 7 *Noe*** By faith Noe, having been warned concerning things not seen as yet, prepared with pious fear an ark in which to save his household. Having thus condemned the world, he was made heir of the justice which is through faith.
- 8 *Abraham*** By faith he who is called Abraham obeyed by going out into a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was
- 9** going. By faith he abode in the Land of Promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the
- 10** co-heirs of the same promise; | for he was looking for the city with fixed foundations, of which city the architect and the builder is God.
- 11 *Sara*** By faith even Sara herself, who was barren, received power for the conception of a child when she was past the time of life, because she believed that he who had given
- 12** the promise was faithful. And so there sprang from one man, though he was as good as dead, issue like the stars of heaven in number and innumerable as the sand that is by the seashore.
- 13 *The Heavenly Country*** In the way of faith all these died without receiving the promises, but beholding them afar off, and saluting them and acknowledging that they

11, 5: See Gn 5, 24.

11, 6: This is a key verse in Catholic theology to show that the requirement for salvation is the belief that God exists and that he is the remunerator.

11, 7: See Gn 6, 8-22.

11, 8: See Gn 12, 1-4.

11, 9: See Gn 23, 4.

11, 10: See Ap 21, 2 and 10.

11, 11: See Gn 17, 19.

11, 12: See Gn 15, 5.

11, 13-15: These heroes kept the faith even though they died without seeing the fulfillment of God's promises (v. 13). They were in quest of heaven (v. 14). They could easily have returned to their Mesopotamian homeland, had they so desired (v. 15).

14 were pilgrims and strangers on earth. For they who say
 15 these things show plainly that they seek a country of their
 own. And indeed if they were thinking of the country from
 which they went out, they certainly would have had opportu-
 16 nity to return; | but as it is they seek after a better, that
 is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed
 to be called their God, for he has prepared for them
 a city.

17 *Abraham's Trial* By faith Abraham, when he was put to
 the test, offered Isaac; and he who had received the promises
 18 | (to whom it had been said, "In Isaac thy seed shall be
 called") was about to offer up his only-begotten son,
 19 | reasoning that God has power to raise up even from the
 dead; whence also he received him back as a type.

20 *Isaac, Jacob, Joseph* By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau
 21 even regarding things to come. By faith Jacob, when dying,
 blessed each of the sons of Joseph and bowed in worship
 22 towards the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when dying,
 made mention of the departure of the sons of Israel and
 gave orders concerning his bones.

23 *Amram and Jochabed* By faith Moses was hidden by his
 parents for three months after his birth, because they saw
 he was a beautiful babe and they did not fear the king's
 edict.

24 *Moses* By faith Moses, when he was grown up, denied

11, 16: *Not ashamed*: an understatement to say that God was proud of being their God.

11, 17-20: After having seen in Isaac the fulfillment of God's promise of a son, Abraham's faith was again tested (see Gn 22, 1-19 n).

11, 18: See Gn 21, 12.

11, 19: According to the inspired writer, Abraham did not think that the sacrifice of his son would terminate God's promises of enduring posterity, because God could always raise up his son. *Whence*: "hence" is preferable. *A type*: literally, "a parable." Isaac's escape from death is here reread as a prefigurement of the later Christian privilege of the resurrection from the dead, and perhaps even of Christ's resurrection.

11, 20: See Gn 27, 27-40.

11, 21: See Gn 48, 15.

11, 22: See Gn 50, 23-24.

11, 23: See Ex 2, 2.

11, 24: See Ex 2, 11.

25 that he was a son of Pharaoh's daughter; | choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God than to have the
 26 enjoyment of sin for a time, | esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the Egyptians;
 27 for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he persevered as
 28 if seeing him who cannot be seen. By faith he celebrated the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, that he who destroyed the firstborn might not touch them.

29 *The Israelites* By faith they passed through the Red Sea, as through dry land; whereas the Egyptians, attempting it,
 30 were swallowed up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had gone around them for seven days.

31 *Rahab* By faith Rahab the harlot, who had received the spies in peace, did not perish with the unbelievers.

32 *More Heroes of Faith* And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, of Barac, of Samson,
 33 of Jephthe, of David and of Samuel and the prophets, | who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained
 34 promises, stopped the mouths of lions, | quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, put to
 35 flight armies of aliens. Women had their dead restored to them by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might find a better resurrection.
 36 Others had experience of mockery and stripes, yes, even

11, 25-26: One opinion of this difficult text is that "Christ" (which in Greek means "anointed") equates and is parallel in meaning to "the people of God." Hence, Moses chose to suffer with God's people, and he esteemed the reproach of God's people greater than all the riches of the Egyptians. The inspired author hereby reflects his own belief and the belief of Christians in the inestimable value of uniting their sufferings with the sufferings of the Messiah.

11, 27: See Ex 2, 15.

11, 28: See Ex 12, 21ff.

11, 29: See Ex 14, 22ff.

11, 30: See Jos 6, 20.

11, 31: See Jos 2, 3.

11, 33-34: These brief eulogies correspond with the six names and with "the prophets" mentioned in v. 32.

11, 35: *Resurrection*: see 3 Kgs 17, 23. *Tortured*: see 2 Mc 6, 18—17, 42.

11, 36: See Jer 20, 2; 37, 15.

37 of chains and prisons. They were stoned, they were sawed
 asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the
 sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, desti-
 38 tute, distressed, afflicted—| of whom the world was not
 worthy—wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes
 in the earth.

39 *Imperfection of Their State* And all these, though they
 had been approved by the testimony of faith, did not
 40 receive what was promised, | for God had something better
 in view for us; so that they should not be perfected without
 us.

II. OTHER VIRTUES

12

1 *Constancy* Therefore let us also, having such a cloud
 of witnesses over us, put away every encumbrance and the
 sin entangling us, and run with patience to the fight set
 2 before us; | looking towards the author and finisher of faith,
 Jesus, who for the joy set before him, endured a cross,
 despising shame, and sits at the right hand of the throne
 3 of God. Consider, then, him who endured such opposition
 from sinners against himself, so that you may not grow
 weary and lose heart.

4 For you have not yet resisted unto blood in the struggle
 5 with sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation that is
 addressed to you as sons, saying, "My son, neglect not the
 discipline of the Lord, neither be thou weary when thou
 6 art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loves, he chastises;
 and he scourges every son whom he receives."

7 Continue under discipline. God deals with you as with
 sons; for what son is there whom his father does not
 8 correct? But if you are without discipline, in which all have

11, 37: See 2 Par 24, 21.

11, 38: See 1 Mc 2, 28-30.

11, 39-40: Although these heroes were faithful, they did not re-
 ceive the fullness of God's promises and thus were not "perfected,"
 for God held back the realization of his promises till the Messianic
 era. The inspired author implies by way of exhortation that the long-
 awaited fulfillment of these promises of graces must not be jeopardized
 by apostasy.

12, 1: *A cloud of witnesses*: see the honor roll in 11, 1-38.

12, 2: *Finisher of faith*: Christ perfects faith in Christians through
 grace and glory.

12, 5-6: See Prv 3, 11.

had a share, then you are illegitimate children and not
 9 sons. Furthermore, we had fathers of our flesh to correct
 us, and we revered them. Shall we not much more obey
 10 the Father of spirit and live? For they indeed corrected
 us for a few days, as they saw fit; but he for our benefit,
 11 that we may share his holiness. Now all discipline seems
 for the present to be a matter not for joy but for grief;
 but afterwards it yields the most peaceful fruit of justice
 12 to those who have been exercised by it. Therefore brace
 up the hands that hang down, and the tottering knees,
 13 | and make straight paths for your feet; that no one who is
 lame may go out of the way, but rather be healed.

14 *Peace and Holiness* Strive for peace with all men, and for
 15 that holiness without which no man will see God. Take
 heed lest anyone be wanting in the grace of God; lest any
 root of bitterness springing up cause trouble and by it the
 16 many be defiled; | lest there be any immoral or profane per-
 17 son, such as Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright. For
 know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the
 blessing, he was rejected; for he found no opportunity for
 repentance, although he had sought after it with tears.

18 *Sinai and the New Sion* For you have not approached a
 mountain that may be touched, and a burning fire, and whirl-
 19 wind and darkness and storm, | and sound of trumpet, and
 sound of words; which sound was such that those who heard
 entreated that the word should not be spoken to them;
 20 | for they could not bear what was being said: "And if
 21 even a beast touches the mount, it shall be stoned." And so
 terrible was the spectacle that Moses said, "I am greatly
 22 terrified and trembling." But you have come to Mount
 Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeru-
 salem, and to the company of many thousands of angels,

12, 12-13: The general meaning is: do not be lazy.

12, 16: See Gn 25, 33.

12, 17: The innuendo is that would-be apostates had better be careful lest they be rejected as Esau was. (See Gn 27, 38.)

12, 18-24: The description of the earthly Sinai covenant is full of awe (vv. 18-21); the description of the heavenly Sion (Jerusalem) covenant is full of peace (vv. 22-24).

12, 18-20: See Ex 19, 12-20.

12, 19: *The word should not be spoken to them*: lest they die (see Ex 20, 19 n).

12, 21: See Dt 9, 19.

12, 22: The four expressions symbolize heaven. See Ap 21, 1-2 n.

- 23 | and to the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in the heavens, and to God, the judge of all, and to the
 24 spirits of the just made perfect, | and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant, and to a sprinkling of blood which
 25 speaks better than Abel. See that you do not refuse him who speaks. For if they did not escape who rejected him who spoke upon earth, much more shall we not escape who turn away from him who speaks to us from heaven.
 26 His voice then shook the earth, but now he promises thus, "Yet once, and I will shake not the earth only but heaven also."
 27 Now by this expression, "yet once," he announces the removal of things which can be shaken—created things—in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, we have grace, through which we may offer
 28 pleasing service to God with fear and reverence. For our
 29 God is a consuming fire.

13

- 1.2 **Brotherly Love and Purity** Let brotherly love abide in you, and do not forget to entertain strangers; for thereby some
 3 have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in bonds as if you were bound with them, and those

12, 23: *The firstborn . . . in the heavens*: it is disputed whether this refers to the angels in heaven or to the Christians on earth. *Spirits of the just made perfect*: those who died and are in heaven.

12, 24: This verse is generally understood to mean: the blood of Jesus speaks better because it asks for mercy in contrast with Abel's which clamors for vengeance (Gn 4, 10).

12, 25: According to one opinion, the contrast is between Moses "who spoke upon earth" (to his people) and Jesus "who speaks to us from heaven" (to the Christians living on earth). The Christians, in their life and worship, are considered to be already celebrating the liturgy with the angels in heaven and with the souls of the faithful departed.

12, 26-27: *Then*: at Sinai. *But now*: when Christ comes at the end of the world he will shake not only the earth as at Sinai but the heavens also (Ag 2, 7). This means that created things will be destroyed and only eternal realities will remain.

12, 28: *We have grace . . . service to God*: in Greek, "let us offer to God pleasing worship. . . ."

12, 29: *God is a consuming fire*: there is a ring of warning to would-be apostates. See Dt 4, 24; Is 33, 14.

13, 2: See Gn 18, 3.

13, 3: *As tarrying yourselves also in the body*: for the free also have a body just as they have who are in bonds.

who are illtreated, as tarrying yourselves also in the body.
 4 Let marriage be held in honor with all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled. For God will judge the immoral and adulterers.

5 **God Will Never Fail You** Let your manner of life be without avarice; be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee." So that we may confidently say, "The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man shall do to me."

7 **Loyalty to Christ and Superiors** Remember your superiors, who spoke to you the word of God. Consider how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today, yes, and forever.

9 Do not be led away by various and strange doctrines. For it is good to make steadfast the heart by grace, not by foods, in which those who walked found no profit. We have an altar, from which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Holies by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp; | and so Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us therefore go forth to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach; | for here we have no permanent city, but we seek for the city that is to come. Through him, therefore, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, fruit of lips praising his name. And do not forget kindness and charity, for by such sacrifices God's favor is obtained. Obey your superiors and be subject to them, for they keep watch as having to render an account

13, 5: See Jos 1, 5.

13, 6: See Ps 117, 6.

13, 7: Remember those who ended their lives in preaching the Gospel, and imitate their faith. But the unchanging Christ should be a greater motive to keep the faith.

13, 9: *Strange doctrines*: difficult to identify. *Foods*: probably a reference to Jewish rites or a symbol of anything opposing grace.

13, 10: *Altar*: Christ himself? The cross? The Eucharistic table? *Who serve the tabernacle*: probably a prohibition to attend Jewish temple services.

13, 11: *Outside the camp*: see Lv 16, 27.

13, 12: *The gate*: of Jerusalem.

13, 13: An encouragement to accept abuse for the sake of Jesus.

13, 14: *Here*: on earth.

of your souls; so that they may do this with joy, and not with grief, for that would not be expedient for you.

CONCLUSION

¹⁸ *Request for Prayer* Pray for us. For we are confident that we have a good conscience, desiring to live uprightly in all
¹⁹ things. But I more especially exhort you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

²⁰ *Blessing* Now may the God of peace, who brought forth from the dead the great pastor of the sheep, our Lord
²¹ Jesus, in virtue of the blood of an everlasting covenant, | fit you with every good thing to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

²² *Greetings* And I beseech you, brethren, to bear with this word of exhortation; for I have written to you in few
²³ words. Know that our brother Timothy has been set free;
²⁴ with whom (if he comes soon) I will see you. Greet all your superiors and all the saints. The brethren from Italy send
²⁵ you greetings. | Grace be with you all. Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION

This little inspired work is too impersonal to be classified as a letter. Its contents and style are reminiscent of the Book of Proverbs. The admonitions and teachings of James are built more on associations of ideas than on some definite principle of division. The author advises a practical way of life in accordance with a God-pleasing wisdom, the dominant motives of which are the love of God and of one's neighbor besides a supernatural view on life, temptation, trials, and poverty. The contents of this epistle suggest, furthermore, that it addresses Christians converted from Judaism rather than from paganism (see 1, 1 n).

The traditional opinion holds that the author who identifies himself as "James, the servant of God" (1, 1) is James the Less, the brother (cousin) of Jesus and first bishop of the Jerusalem community. He must not be confused with the son of Zebedee and brother of St. John, James the Greater (the Elder) who was executed during Herod Agrippa's reign (41-44 A.D.). See Acts 12, 2.

The advocates of the traditional view dispute whether James wrote the epistle in the early sixties or in the middle forties before the Council of Jerusalem (49-50) over which he presided.

Many Protestant commentators who deny James' authorship, date the epistle from between 70 to 150 A.D.

It is admitted that the epistle is written in superb Greek. The author's vocabulary includes numerous rare words, his grammar is precise, his style majestic, terse, and vivid in the frequent figures of speech. Because of this pure Greek style some experts believe that James employed a Hellenist secretary.

In the present Confraternity (CCD) edition of the New Testament the epistle of St. James is the first of seven "Catholic" epistles. The others are: the first and second epistles of St. Peter, the first, second, and third epistles of St. John, and the epistle of St. Jude. There is no satisfactory explanation for the traditional name "Catholic." The common and modern explanation is that they are called Catholic because they were addressed to the universal Church but this is not true of at least the second and third epistles of St. John.

Main divisions of the Epistle of St. James are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1
2. Exhortation to Patience in Trials, 1, 2-18
3. Living and Active Faith, 1, 19-2, 26
4. The Hazard of Teaching, 3, 1-18
5. Special Admonitions, 4, 1-5, 6
6. Conclusion, 5, 7-20

INTRODUCTION

1

¹ *Greeting* James, the servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes that are in the Dispersion: greeting.

I. EXHORTATION TO PATIENCE IN TRIALS

² *Wisdom in Trials* Esteem it all joy, my brethren, when
³ you fall into various trials, | knowing that the trying of your
⁴ faith begets patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

⁵ But if any of you is wanting in wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives abundantly to all men, and does not re-
⁶ proach; and it will be given to him. But let him ask with faith, without hesitation. For he who hesitates is like a wave of the sea, driven and carried about by the wind.
⁷ Therefore, let not such a one think that he will receive
⁸ anything from the Lord, | being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ But let the brother of lowly condition glory in his high
¹⁰ estate, | and the rich man in his low condition; for he will
¹¹ pass away like the flower of the grass. For the sun rises with a burning heat and parches the grass, and its flower falls and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So too will the rich man wither in his ways.

1, 1: *The twelve tribes that are in the Dispersion*: this phrase usually refers to the Jews living outside of Palestine, but since James' readers were Christians, the phrase has been interpreted to mean converts from Judaism living outside of Palestine. The phrase may be interpreted figuratively to refer to all Christians living on earth and therefore being "dispersed" from their true home in heaven.

1, 2: *Trials*: not temptations or persecution but rather everyday misfortunes.

1, 3: *Patience*: a favorite word in the epistle, meaning "constancy."

1, 4: *And let patience have its perfect work*: let constancy be fully exercised.

1, 5: *Wisdom*: especially in one's moral life.

1, 8: *Double-minded man*: a vacillating person.

1, 9-11: The general meaning is that a poor Christian should feel consoled in his spiritual riches, and so should a rich man who loses his fortune.

- 12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been tried, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.
- 13 *Sources of Evil and Good* Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted by God; for God is no tempter to evil, and he himself tempts no one. But everyone is tempted by being drawn away and enticed by his own passion. Then when passion has conceived, it brings forth sin; but when sin has matured, it begets death. Therefore, my beloved brethren, do not err.
- 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration. Of his own will he has begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be, as it were, the first-fruits of his creatures.

II. LIVING AND ACTIVE FAITH

- 19 *Hearers and Doers of the Word of God* You know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. For the wrath of man does not work the justice of God. Therefore, casting aside all uncleanness and abundance of malice, with meekness

1, 12: *Temptation*: see 1, 2 n. *Life*: eternal life.

1, 13: Compare "say not: 'It was God's doing that I fell away!'" in Sir 15, 11. *He is tempted by God*: in Greek, "I am tempted by God." *For God is no tempter to evil*: a preferable Greek reading is: "for God cannot be tempted by evil."

1, 14-15: A psychological description of the birth of sin.

1, 15: See Milton's famous allegory on this verse in *Paradise Lost*, Bk. II. *Death*: eternal death. Compare Rom 6, 23.

1, 16: *Therefore*: omit. *Do not err*: do not be deceived because temptations do not come from God (v. 13) but from him is "every good gift . . ." (vv. 17-18).

1, 17: *Father of Lights*: James awkwardly uses this expression for God as the creator of the heavenly bodies to represent him as the Father of spiritual lights or of all that is good. *With whom there is no change . . . alteration*: even though the Greek text and its meaning are obscure, many experts agree that these words allude to the heavenly bodies which, in contrast to God's unchangeableness, change with every movement.

1, 18: *The word of truth*: the Gospel, according to most scholars.

1, 19: The beginning of this verse would read better "Know this, my beloved brethren: let every . . ." *Be swift . . . speak*: compare "Be swift to hear, but slow to answer" in Sir 5, 13.

1, 20: Anger does not help God's cause.

1, 21: Compare the obstacles to the word in Mt 13, 22. *Word*: see "word of truth," 1, 18 n.

receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.
 22 But he doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving
 23 yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a
 24 doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a
 25 mirror: | for he looks at himself and goes away, and pres-
 26 ently he forgets what kind of man he is. But he who has
 looked carefully into the perfect law of liberty and has
 remained in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer but a doer
 26 of the work, shall be blessed in his deed. And if anyone
 thinks himself to be religious, not restraining his tongue
 but deceiving his own heart, that man's religion is vain.
 27 Religion pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:
 to give aid to orphans and widows in their tribulation, and
 to keep oneself unspotted from this world.

2

1 *Impartiality* My brethren, do not join faith in our glori-
 ous Lord Jesus Christ with partiality towards persons.
 2 For if a man in fine apparel, having a gold ring, enters your
 3 assembly, and a poor man in mean attire enters also, | and
 you pay attention to him who is clothed in fine apparel
 and say, "Sit thou here in this good place"; but you say
 to the poor man, "Stand thou there," or, "Sit by my foot-
 4 stool"; | are you not making distinctions among yourselves,
 and do you not become judges with evil thoughts? Listen,
 5 my beloved brethren! Has not God chosen the poor of
 this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom
 6 which God has promised to those who love him? But you
 have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich use their

1, 22-24: A man who looks in the mirror and forgets what he looks like is as the one who "is a hearer but no doer," i.e., he hears but does not act accordingly.

1, 22: *Doers of the word*: a Semitic expression.

1, 23: *Mirror*: see 1 Cor 13, 12.

1, 25: *Law of liberty*: God's word as a norm for conduct, the observance of which frees one from being a slave to sin. James' notion of liberty does not seem to extend as far as Paul's (see Gal 4, 31 n).

1, 26: "To restrain the tongue" was a common expression among the Greek writers.

1, 27: *Unspotted from this world*: the meaning may be: free from the sins of the pagans.

2, 2: *Assembly*: this is the only place in the New Testament where (in the original text) "synagogue" is used for a Christian assembly.

2, 6: *The rich*: these may be either non-Christian visitors (Jews and Gentiles) or wealthy Christians who have not lived up to their religion.

power to oppress you, and do they not drag you before judgment-seats? Do they not blaspheme the good name by which you are called?

8 If, however, you fulfill the royal law, according to the Scriptures, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," you do well. But if you show partiality towards persons, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law, but offends in one point has become guilty in all. For he who said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," said also, "Thou shalt not kill." Now if thou wilt not commit adultery, yet wilt commit murder thou hast become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as men about to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to him who has not shown mercy; but mercy triumphs over judgment.

14 **Practical Faith** What will it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but does not have works? Can the faith save him? | And if a brother or a sister be naked and in want of daily food, | and one of you say to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit? So faith too, unless it has works, is dead in itself. But someone will say, "Thou hast faith, and I have works." Show me thy faith without works, and I from my works will show thee my faith. | Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well. The devils also believe, and tremble.
20 But dost thou want to know, O senseless man, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son upon

2, 7: *Name*: of Christ "by which you are called" Christian.

2, 8: *The royal law*: of charity. See Lv 19, 18.

2, 10-11: The law is considered as a whole (see Gal 3, 10 n). James does not mean that one who is guilty of adultery is also guilty of murder.

2, 11: See Ex 20, 13f.

2, 12: *Law of liberty*: see 1, 25 n.

2, 13: *Judgment*: condemnation.

2, 15: *Naked*: poorly clad.

2, 18: Someone may argue that it is perfectly correct for one person to have faith and another to do work. James answers: you cannot prove your faith without works, whereas from my works I can prove the activity and therefore the existence of my faith.

2, 19: The devils exemplify well that intellectual faith alone is insufficient.

2, 20: James offers proof from scripture that faith is not enough.

2, 21: A reference to Gn 22, 9ff.

- 22 the altar? Dost thou see that faith worked along with his works, and by the works the faith was made perfect?
 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as justice,
 24 and he was called the friend of God." You see that by
 25 works a man is justified, and not by faith only. In like manner, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out another way?
 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith also without works is dead.

III. THE HAZARD OF TEACHING

3

- 1 *Abuses of the Tongue* Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that you will receive a
 2 greater judgment. For in many things we all offend. If anyone does not offend in word, he is a perfect man, able also
 3 to lead round by a bridle the whole body. For if we put bits into horses' mouths that they may obey us, we control their
 4 whole body also. Behold, even the ships, great as they are, and driven by boisterous winds, are steered by a small
 5 rudder wherever the touch of the steersman pleases. So the tongue also is a little member, but it boasts mightily. Behold, how small a fire—how great a forest it kindles!
 6 | And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, defiling the whole body, and setting on fire the course of our life, being itself
 7 set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, and of serpents and the rest, is tamed and has been tamed by
 8 mankind; | but the tongue no man can tame—a restless evil,

2, 23: See Gn 15, 6.

2, 24: *By works a man is justified, and not by faith only*: there is only an apparent contradiction between James and Paul (Rom 3, 28): "For we reckon that a man is justified by *faith* independently of the *works* of the Law. Paul insists that man merits salvation by faith in Jesus as the Messiah and as God, and not by the works of the Mosaic Law. James insists that man merits salvation not by faith in Jesus as the Messiah and as God alone but by works of charity also.

2, 25: A reference to Jos 2, 4ff.

3, 1: *Knowing . . . judgment*: means "because you know that we teachers shall be judged with greater strictness."

3, 6: The tongue's power to destroy is compared with that of fire. *Hell*: in Greek "Gehenna," the ultimate source of the tongue's evil powers.

3, 7: *And the rest*: in Greek, "and sea creature."

9 full of deadly poison. With it we bless God the Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. These things, my brethren, ought not to be so. Does the fountain send forth sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a vine figs? So neither can salt water yield fresh water.

13 *True Wisdom* Who is wise and instructed among you? Let him by his good behavior show his work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and contentions in your hearts, do not glory and be liars against the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that descends from above. It is 16 earthly, sensual, devilish. | For where there is envy and contentiousness, there is instability and every wicked deed. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first of all chaste, then peaceable, moderate, docile, in harmony with good things, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, 18 without dissimulation. The fruit of justice is sown in peace by those who make peace.

IV. SPECIAL ADMONITION

4
1 *Sources of Discord* Whence do wars and quarrels come among you? Is it not from this, from your passions, which 2 wage war in your members? You covet and do not have; you kill and envy, and cannot obtain. You quarrel and wrangle, 3 and you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may 4 spend it upon your passions. Adulterers, do you not know that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of this world 5 becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit which dwells in you covets 6 unto jealousy"? | But he gives a greater grace. For this reason it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the 7 humble." Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil,

3, 9: *God the Father*: in Greek, "the Lord and Father."

4, 4: *Adulterers*: a preferable reading is "unfaithful creatures."

4, 5: This is a paraphrase of Ex 20, 3 and 5.

4, 6: *But he gives a greater grace*: God gives us more precious gifts than the world does. See Prv 3, 34.

8 and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and
 9 purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be sorrowful, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning,
 10 ing, and your joy into sadness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

11 **Presumption** Brethren, do not speak against one another. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law. But if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver and Judge, he who is able to destroy
 13 and to save. But thou who judgest thy neighbor, who art thou?

Behold now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and spend a year there, and trade and
 14 make money"; | you who do not know what will happen
 15 tomorrow. | For what is your life? It is a mist that appears for a little while, and then vanishes. You ought rather to say, "If the Lord will," and, "If we live, we will do this
 16 or that." | But now you boast in your arrogance. All such
 17 boasting is evil. Therefore he who knows how to do good, and does not do it, commits a sin.

5

1 **The Unjust Rich** Come now, you rich, weep and howl
 2 over your miseries which will come upon you. Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten.
 3 Your gold and silver are rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you, and will devour your flesh as fire
 4 does. You have laid up treasure in the last days. | Behold, the wages of the laborers who reaped your fields, which have been kept back by you unjustly, cry out; and their
 5 cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. You have feasted upon earth, and you have nourished your
 6 hearts on dissipation in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the just, and he did not resist you.

4, 8: *Double-minded*: vacillating persons.

4, 15: *And, "if we live, we will do this or that"*: in Greek, "we shall live and do this or that."

5, 5: *The day of slaughter*: this may mean the final judgment.

CONCLUSION

7 *Patience in Affliction* Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient until it receives
8 the early and the late rain. Do you also be patient; strengthen your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at
9 hand. Do not complain against one another, brethren, that you may not be judged. Behold, the judge is standing at
10 the door. Take, brethren, as an example of labor and patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
11 Behold, we call them blessed who have endured. | You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is merciful and compassionate. But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by the earth, or any other oath; but let your yes be yes, your no, no; that you may not fall under judgment.

13 *Last Anointing, Confession and Prayer* Is any one of you sad? Let him pray. Is any one in good spirits? Let him
14 sing a hymn. | Is any one among you sick? Let him bring in the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over
15 him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will

5, 7: *The coming of the Lord*: probably refers to the second coming of Christ.

5, 8: See 1 Thes 2, 16.

5, 12: See Mt 5, 33-37 n.

5, 13: James passes from oaths (v. 12) to prayers for all circumstances. "If anyone is suffering" (perhaps a better translation than "Is any one of you sad?"), let him pray rather than complain. If any one is happy, let him sing a hymn to God.

5, 14: *Is any one among you sick?*: a safe presumption is that the text refers to bodily illness, but the degree of illness is not indicated. *Presbyters of the Church*: the local ruling college of elders (see Acts 20, 17 n). *Let them pray over him*: since the Greek preposition conveys the local sense of "over," some experts see a possible allusion to an imposition of hands. *Anointing him with oil*: olive oil was in the ancient world a general therapeutic remedy. *In the name of the Lord*: the better interpretation of the invocation "Lord" is Jesus rather than God.

5, 15: *The prayer of faith*: a prayer permeated with faith. This expression refers to the praying mentioned in v. 14. "Will save" and "will raise him up" refer to "saving" from death and "raising up" to health. But the early Christians knew that people died in spite of prayer and faith in Christ. Hence, James' words must have

raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven
 16 him. Confess, therefore, your sins to one another, and pray
 for one another, that you may be saved. For the unceasing
 17 prayer of a just man is of great avail. Elias was a man
 like ourselves, subject to the same infirmities; and he prayed
 earnestly that it might not rain upon the earth, and it did
 18 not rain for three years and six months. He prayed again,
 and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth
 its fruit.

19 *Conversion of a Sinner* My brethren, if any one of you
 strays from the truth and someone brings him back,
 20 | he ought to know that he who causes a sinner to be
 brought back from his misguided way, will save his soul
 from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

given the Christians to understand implicitly that this apparently absolute cure which he promises depends on the will of God (1 Jn 5, 14). *If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him*: there are two effects of the ritual described by James, a restoration to health, and forgiveness of sins. In conformity with previous Church tradition, the Council of Trent defined this passage to mean the Anointing of the Sick, as the sacrament is called nowadays in preference to the term "Extreme Unction." Recent studies have shown that using this sacrament to prepare sick persons for death was not its original purpose but a later development. The proper modern emphasis on the Anointing of the Sick as the sacrament of healing physically and spiritually is, therefore, much more in agreement with James' description.

The "sins" are grievous sins. This rite differs from the New Testament charism of healing insofar as the rite effects the forgiveness of sins.

5, 16: This is not sacramental confession before a priest but a public confession alike to the Confiteor in the Roman Mass. For similar biblical examples see Dn 9, 4ff; Mt 3, 6. *That you may be saved*: "healed" (in Greek) either from bodily illness or from sin or from both, since in the Jewish mentality these two were closely associated.

5, 17: *Three years and six months*: this was a round number colloquially used in Palestine. 3 Kgs 18, 1 mentions only three years.

5, 18: See 3 Kgs 18, 42.

5, 20: *He ought to know*: in Greek, "let him know." *Cover a multitude of sins*: compare 1 Pt 4, 8 n. It is disputed whose sins are "covered," those of the sinner or of the rescuer.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION

Although this epistle has been traditionally attributed to St. Peter, its authorship is disputed. The modern trend seems to ascribe the ideas of the letter to Peter (1, 1; 5, 1), the actual writing, however, to Silvanus (5, 12), who is the same Silas that had been the companion of Paul (Acts 15, 40ff). This modern opinion would best explain the most serious objection against Peter's authorship, for the fine Greek style of the epistle with its marked use of the Greek Old Testament is not Peter's. Neither is the influence of Paul's theology that permeates the epistle (see 2, 10 n), and the emphasis on the teaching of Christ's redemption in preference to the usual numerous quotations of Christ's words.

Scholars generally hold that this epistle was written before 64 A.D., that is, before the beginning of Nero's persecution. The place of writing was Rome (see 5, 13 n for "Babylon"). The purpose of the letter was to encourage the Christians to keep the faith in the face of trials that were about to begin. Perhaps Silvanus informed Peter of their sufferings (5, 12). These Gentile Christians, who were living in Asia Minor [present-day Turkey] (1, 1), were also subjected to false teachings that cannot be identified with any known heresy.

If Peter's authorship is shrouded in darkness, so are the facts of his life after the Council of Jerusalem in 49-50 A.D. In spite of the inference of Eusebius, it is not proven that Peter preached in the places of Asia Minor that are mentioned in 1 Pt 1. Neither must it be taken as a certainty that he went to Corinth just because a group of his adherents lived there (see 1 Cor 1, 12 for "Cephas"—the Rock, Peter).

Turning to Rome, it is agreed nowadays: 1. That Peter was at Rome during the last years of his life. 2. From literary and archeological evidence it is probable that Peter (and Paul) were martyred at Rome during Nero's persecution (see Jn 21, 19 n).

Matters still under discussion are:

1. The date of Peter's arrival in Rome. (It was probably in the fifties, at the earliest.)
2. The duration of Peter's ministry. (The tradition that Peter lived in Rome for twenty-five years is not historically reliable.)
3. The year of Peter's (and Paul's) death. (64 or 67?)
4. The site of Peter's execution. (Although Peter's tomb has not been found, it is probable that he was executed on the Vatican hill.)

As to the literary form of 1 Pt, it is commonly held to be a letter cast in a hortatory mold. In recent decades, some Protestant scholars—followed by an increasing number of Catholics—have been showing that 1 Pt is a baptismal homily, if not entirely at least partially (1, 3—4, 11). The homily, dating from about 50 A.D., was given at

the Easter vigil when adults were baptized. Characteristic of this homily is the typology of the Exodus (see 2, 4-10 and annotations), which means that Christian baptism was prefigured by different events of the Exodus; the departure from Egypt; the alliance at Mount Sinai; and the march in the desert toward the Promised Land. (Since many of the allusions to baptism are problematic, our annotations to the biblical text are not a full-scale effort to support the view that the epistle is written in the literary form of a baptismal homily.)

Main divisions of the First Epistle of St. Peter are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-12
2. General Counsels of Christian Holiness, 1, 13—2, 10
3. Particular Counsels of Christian Conduct, 2, 11—4, 6
4. Christian Service and the Coming Judgment, 4, 7—5, 11
5. Conclusion, 5, 12-14

INTRODUCTION

1

- 1 **Greeting** Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and
- 2 Bithynia, chosen | unto the sanctification of the Spirit according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of his blood: grace and peace be given you in abundance.
- 3 **Thanksgiving** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has begotten us again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
- 4 dead, unto a living hope, | unto an incorruptible inheritance—
- 5 undefiled and unfading, reserved for you in heaven. By the power of God you are guarded through faith for salvation,
- 6 which is ready to be revealed in the last time. Over this you rejoice; though now for a little while, if need be, you are
- 7 made sorrowful by various trials, | that the temper of your faith—more precious by far than gold which is tried by fire—may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. | Him, though you have not seen, you love. In him, though you do not see him, yet believing,
- 9 you exult with a joy unspeakable and triumphant; | receiving, as the final issue of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 10 The prophets who foretold the grace that was to come for you made earnest inquiry and search concerning this salvation. They searched what time or circumstances the Spirit of Christ in them was signifying, when he foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they were ministering those things which now have been declared to you by those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things angels desire to look.

1, 1: *Dispersion*: see Jas 1, 1 n. The provinces make up most of Asia Minor. *The sprinkling of his blood*: the Christians were chosen for redemption, which is here expressed by an allusion to the old alliance at Mount Sinai (Ex 24, 8).

1, 7: *Which is tried by fire*: in Greek, "which perishes, proved though it is by fire." *At the revelation of Jesus Christ*: at the end of the world.

1, 11: *Spirit of Christ*: according to one opinion, this expression refers to Jesus pre-existing before he became man.

I. GENERAL COUNSELS OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

- 13 *Filial Obedience and Fear*** Therefore, having girded up the loins of your understanding, be sober and set your hope completely upon that grace which is brought to you in the **14** revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not conform to the lusts of former days when you were ignorant; | **15** but as the One who called you is holy, be you also holy in **16** all your behavior; | for it is written, "You shall be holy, because I am holy."
- 17** And if you invoke as Father him who without respect of persons judges according to each one's work, conduct **18** yourselves with fear in the time of your sojourning. You know that you were redeemed from the vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, not with perishable things, **19** with silver or gold, | but with the precious blood of Christ, **20** as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, he has been **21** manifested in the last times for your sakes. Through him you are believers in God who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

- 22 *Brotherly Love*** Now that your obedience to charity has purified your souls for a brotherly love that is sincere, love **23** one another heartily and intensely. For you have been re-born, not from corruptible seed but from incorruptible, through the word of God who lives and abides forever. **24** For, "All flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass; the grass withered, and the flower has fallen— | **25** but the word of the Lord endures forever."

Now this is the word of the gospel that was preached to you.

1, 16: See Lv 19, 2.

1, 17: See Rom 2, 11, "with God there is no respect of persons." *Sojourning*: on earth.

1, 19: Compare Heb 9, 14.

1, 20: *The last times*: the Messianic times, begun by Jesus. They will last till the end of the world.

1, 22: *To charity*: in Greek, "to truth." The Christians' obedience to the word of God purified them.

1, 24: See Is 40, 6-8. For the same idea see Za 1, 5-6 n.

2

- 1 **Growth in Holiness** Lay aside therefore all malice, and
 2 all deceit, and pretense, and envy, and all slander. Crave, as
 3 newborn babes, pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow
 4 to salvation; | if, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is
 5 sweet. Draw near to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by
 6 men but chosen and honored by God. Be you yourselves as
 7 living stones, built thereon into a spiritual house, a holy
 8 priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
 9 through Jesus Christ. Hence Scripture says, "Behold, I lay in
 10 Sion a chief corner stone, chosen, precious; and he who believes
 in it shall not be put to shame."
 7 For you, therefore, who believe is this honor; but to those
 who do not believe, "A stone which the builders rejected,
 8 the same has become the head of the corner," | and, "A
 stumbling-stone, and a rock of scandal," to those who stumble
 at the word, and who do not believe.
 9 For this also they are destined. | You, however, are a
 chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased
 people; that you may proclaim the perfections of him who
 has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.
 10 You who in times past were not a people, but are now the

2, 1-10: An exhortation to live in intimate union with Christ.

2, 2: *Newborn babes*: the Christians are reborn through faith and baptism. *Pure spiritual milk*: the word of God.

2, 3: *The Lord is sweet*: on this expression of spiritual intimacy, see Ps 33, 9ff n.

2, 4: *A living stone*: in an allusion to the incident in the desert when Moses struck the rock for water (Ex 17, 1-7), the Christians are urged to quench their spiritual thirst by drawing closer to Christ. See 1 Cor 10, 1-4 on the same theme. *Rejected by men . . . a spiritual house*: within vv. 4-5, the theme of the living stone subtly shifts to the theme of the rejected corner stone to symbolize a spiritual people.

2, 5: By the metaphor of the temple ("a spiritual house"), the aspect of the new Christian people's dedication to God in liturgical worship is highlighted.

2, 6: On the main theme of the corner stone see Is 28, 16 n.

2, 7: *For you . . . is this honor*: in a sense, the Jews passed on the privileges of a Chosen People to the Christians. See Ps 117, 22 n.

2, 8: *Do not believe*: in Greek, "being disobedient." *For this also they are destined*: the theme of the corner stone (v. 7) turns into that of the stumbling-stone (of Is 8, 14) which symbolizes the rejection of the Chosen People.

2, 9: See 2, 5 n. *A chosen people, . . . a purchased people*: from Ex 19, 5-6. *A purchased people*: in Greek, "a people for (God's) possession."

2, 10: In vv. 4-10 there are an extraordinary accumulation of Old Testament metaphors and a chain of quotations. Most of the

people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

II. PARTICULAR COUNSELS OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

- 11 *Good Example*** Beloved, I exhort you as strangers and pilgrims to abstain from carnal desires which war against the
12 soul. Behave yourselves honorably among the pagans; that, whereas they slander you as evildoers, they may, through observing you, by reason of your good works glorify God in the day of visitation.
- 13 *For the Citizen*** Be subject to every human creature for
14 God's sake, whether to the king as supreme, | or to governors as sent through him for vengeance on evildoers and for the
15 praise of the good. For such is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as freemen, yet not using your freedom as a
16 cloak for malice but as servants of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king.
- 18 *For the Slave*** Servants, be subject to your masters in all fear, not only to the good and moderate, but also to the
19 severe. This is indeed a grace, if for consciousness of God anyone endures sorrows, suffering unjustly. For what is the
20 glory if, when you sin and are buffeted, you endure it? But if, when you do right and suffer, you take it patiently, this
21 is acceptable with God. Unto this, indeed, you have been called, because Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you an example that you may follow in his steps:
22 "Who did no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth."
23 Who, when he was reviled, did not revile, when he

metaphors are found in Paul's epistles. The quotations suggest the preoccupation of the early Christians with their explaining through the Old Testament the disbelief of the Jews in Christ.

2, 11: *Strangers and pilgrims*: these metaphors teach that the true homeland of Christians is heaven, but meanwhile they are only "strangers and pilgrims" on earth.

2, 12: *The day of visitation*: either the end of the world or the day of the pagans' conversion.

2, 13: *For God's sake*: in Greek, "for the Lord's sake."

2, 18: Same idea as in Eph 6, 5.

2, 20: See Mt 5, 10 on the same teaching.

2, 22: See Is 53, 9 (part of the fourth Servant Song).

suffered, did not threaten, but yielded himself to him who
 24 judged him unjustly; | who himself bore our sins in his
 body upon the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live
 25 to justice; and by his stripes you were healed. For you were
 as sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the
 shepherd and guardian of your souls.

3

1 *For the Wife and the Husband* In like manner also let
 wives be subject to their husbands; so that even if any do
 not believe the word, they may without word be won through
 2 the behavior of their wives, | observing reverently your chaste
 3 behavior. Let not theirs be the outward adornment of braid-
 ing the hair, or of wearing gold, or of putting on robes; |
 4 but let it be the inner life of the heart, in the imperishable-
 ness of a quiet and gentle spirit, which is of great price in the
 5 sight of God. For after this manner in old times the holy
 women also who hoped in God adorned themselves, while be-
 6 ing subject to their husbands. So Sara obeyed Abraham,
 calling him lord. You are daughters of hers when you do
 what is right and fear no disturbance.
 7 Husbands, in like manner dwell with your wives con-
 siderately, paying honor to the woman as to the weaker ves-
 sel, and as co-heir of the grace of life, that your prayers be
 not hindered.

8 *In Christian Charity* Finally, be all like-minded, com-
 9 passionate, lovers of the brethren, merciful, humble; | not

3, 1: *Let wives be subject to their husbands*: as in Ti 2, 5. *The word*: the gospel. *Without word*: without speaking a word.

3, 3-4: Christian women should be more conspicuous for virtue than for their coiffure, jewelry, and clothes. Compare 1 Tm 2, 9-10 and Is 3, 16-24.

3, 6: *Calling him Lord*: this reference to Gn 18, 12 is not meant to be taken literally. *Do what is right and fear no disturbance*: this is an echo of the sage mentioned in Prv 3, 25 who cares about nothing else but to please God. However, this phrase of v. 6 is capable of several interpretations.

3, 7: *Weaker vessel*: weaker sex, physically speaking. *As co-heir of the grace of life*: the wife is the co-heir of the free gift of eternal life. *That your prayers be not hindered*: the husband's prayers may not be heard if he mistreats his wife.

3, 8: *Finally*: all classes of Christians mentioned in 2, 13—3, 7 are now exhorted. *Like-minded*: united in spirit.

3, 9: See Rom 12, 14 for the same idea.

rendering evil for evil, or abuse for abuse, but contrariwise, blessing; for unto this were you called that you might inherit
 10 a blessing. For "He who would love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak
 11 no deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good, let
 12 him seek after peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

13 *In Christian Suffering* And who is there to harm you, if
 14 you are zealous for what is good? But even if you suffer anything for justice' sake, blessed are you. So have no fear of
 15 their fear and do not be troubled. But hallow the Lord Christ in your hearts. Be ready always with an answer to everyone who asks a reason for the hope that is in you.
 16 Yet do so with gentleness and fear, having a good conscience, so that wherein they speak in disparagement of you they who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to
 17 shame. For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that you suffer for doing good than for doing evil. Because
 18 Christ also died once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Put to death indeed in the flesh, he
 19 was brought to life in the spirit, | in which also he went and

3, 10-12: See Ps 33, 13-17.

3, 14: *Blessed are you:* see Mt 5, 10. *No fear of their fear:* translate, "No fear of them." See Is 8, 12, "So have no fear of them and do not be troubled."

3, 15: *For the hope:* hope is used for faith here.

3, 18-19: *He was brought to life in the spirit . . . preached . . . in prison:* these verses are usually interpreted together with 4, 5-6. The four verses form one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament. The interpretation of it has differed throughout the centuries. The problem in question is the article of faith in the Apostles' Creed, "he descended into hell." The word "hell" (in the Apostles' Creed) means not the place of the damned but the place where the good and the evil dwell together (the *sheol* of the Old Testament). Many Catholics follow the view of St. Irenaeus that Christ "preached" the heralding of redemption to the just people of the Old Testament including those who had at first been disbelievers at the time of Noe (v. 20). Hence, Irenaeus maintains that Christ's descent means more than "burial" because the text implies some sort of activity on the part of Christ. An articulate majority of modern Catholic scholars find the view of Irenaeus unsatisfactory, yet they have not unanimously come up with any particular opinion except that a few of them assert that the elaborate description of Christ's descent means nothing more than that Christ died. These Catholic scholars agree, nevertheless, that the key to the explanation lies in the thought patterns of apocryphal literature, especially in the Book of Henoch.

- 20 preached to those spirits that were in prison. These in times past had been disobedient when the patience of God waited in the days of Noe while the ark was building. In that ark
 21 a few, that is, eight souls were saved through water. Its counterpart, Baptism, now saves you also (not the putting off of the filth of the flesh, but the inquiry of a good conscience after God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; |
 22 who is at the right hand of God, swallowing up death that we might be made heirs of eternal life; for he went into heaven, Angels, Powers and Virtues being made subject to him.

4

- 1 *In Christian Faithfulness* Since Christ therefore has suffered in the flesh, do you also arm yourselves with the same intent; because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased
 2 from sins; | that during the rest of his time in the flesh he may live no longer according to the lusts of men, but according
 3 to the will of God. For sufficient is the time past for those to have accomplished the desire of the pagans, walking, as they did, in dissipation, lusts, drunkenness, revellings, ca-
 4 rousings and unlawful worship of idols. They are amazed that you do not run with them into the same flood of
 5 dissipation, and they abuse you. But they will render an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
 6 For to this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they may be judged indeed as men in flesh but may live as God lives in spirit.

3, 20: *Eight souls*: "Noe and his sons, Sem, Ham and Japheth. Noe's wife and the three wives of Noe's sons" (Gn 7, 13).

3, 21: The common feature in the comparison between the flood and baptism (the flood is a prefigurement of baptism) is Christ's descent and his proclamation of victory over Satan (Reicke). *Not the putting off . . . Jesus Christ*: baptism does not save insofar as the water used at the ceremony removes the dirt from the body; but baptism saves insofar as it symbolizes an appeal to God for a clear conscience through Jesus Christ's resurrection.

3, 22: *Swallowing up death . . . eternal life*: textual critics delete this passage because it is only in the Vulgate and not in the Greek text. *Angels, Powers and Virtues*: the heavenly powers (see Eph 1, 20-21 n).

4, 1-2: Christ's sufferings were beneficial, and so can ours be if we suffer with the same dispositions as he did.

4, 5-6: See 3, 18-19 n.

4, 5: *To him*: to Christ. *The living and the dead*: this phrase is often interpreted to mean all mankind.

III. CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND THE COMING JUDGMENT

7 Mutual Charity But the end of all things is at hand. Be
8 prudent therefore and watchful in prayers. But above all
 things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for
9 charity covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one an-
10 other without murmuring. According to the gift that each
 has received, administer it to one another as good stewards
11 of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let it be as
 with words of God. If anyone ministers, let it be as from
 the strength that God furnishes; that in all things God may
 be honored through Jesus Christ, to whom are the glory and
 the dominion forever. Amen.

12 Blessings of Persecution Beloved, do not be startled at the
 trial by fire that is taking place among you to prove you, as
13 if something strange were happening to you; | but rejoice,
 in so far as you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that
 you may also rejoice with exultation in the revelation of his
14 glory. If you are upbraided for the name of Christ, blessed
 will you be, because the honor, the glory and the power of
15 God and his Spirit rest upon you. Let none of you suffer as
 a murderer, or a thief, or a slanderer, or as one coveting what
16 belongs to others. But if he suffer as a Christian, let him not
 be ashamed, but let him glorify God under this name.
17 For the time has come for the judgment to begin with the
 household of God; but if it begin first with us, what will

4, 7: The early Christians believed in the imminence of Christ's second coming.

4, 8: *Mutual charity*: In Greek, "earnest charity." *For charity covers a multitude of sins*: two of several probable interpretations of this popular saying from Prv 10, 12 are: 1. A charitable person does not speak about the sins of others. 2. Love atones for the many faults of the lover.

4, 10: See 1 Cor 12, 7ff for an elaboration of this idea.

4, 11: A preacher should speak with the authority from God. *Ministers*: a reference to almsgiving, or to any service.

4, 12: *Trial by fire*: some kind of violent suffering. See 1, 7.

4, 14: *Because the honor . . . of God . . . rest upon you*: a better rendition, based on various Greek readings, may be: "because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rest upon you."

4, 15: *As one coveting*: in Greek, this means one who meddles in the affairs of others.

4, 17: If Christians are to suffer much, unbelievers will suffer

- be the end of those who do not believe the gospel of God?
 18 And if the just man scarcely will be saved, where will the
 19 impious and the sinner appear? Therefore let them also who
 suffer according to the will of God commend their souls in
 well-doing to a faithful Creator.

5

1 *For the Ministry* Now I exhort the presbyters among you—
 I, your fellow-presbyter and witness of the sufferings of
 Christ, the partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed
 2 in time to come | —tend the flock of God which is among
 you, governing not under constraint, but willingly, according
 3 to God; nor yet for the sake of base gain, but eagerly; | nor
 yet as lording it over your charges, but becoming from the
 4 heart a pattern to the flock. And when the Prince of the
 shepherds appears, you will receive the unfading crown of
 glory.

5 *Counsels to the Laity* Likewise, you who are younger, be
 subject to the presbyters. And all of you practise humility
 towards one another; for, "God resists the proud, but gives
 grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of
 7 God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation; | cast
 8 all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you. Be so-
 ber, be watchful! For your adversary the devil, as a roaring
 9 lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him, stead-

more. *The Household of God*: similar to "a spiritual house" of v. 5.
Who do not believe: in Greek, "who do not obey."

4, 18: Taken from Prv 11, 31 according to the Greek, not the Hebrew.

4, 19: Compare Ps 30, 6, "Into your hands I commend my spirit
 . . . O Lord."

5, 1: *Fellow-presbyter*: fellow-priest or bishop.

5, 2: *According to God*: another Greek reading is, "as God
 would have you."

5, 3: *From the heart*: not in the Greek text.

5, 4: *The Prince of the Shepherds*: in Greek, "the chief shepherd,"
 the only time this is used for Jesus in the New Testament. Compare
 "the good shepherd" of Jn 10, 11 and "the great shepherd of the
 sheep," Heb 13, 20.

5, 5: *You who are younger*: the reference may be to younger
 people in regard to their ecclesiastical superiors, or to younger
 ministers in regard to high members of the "hierarchy." The
 quotation is from the Greek version of Prv 3, 34.

5, 6: *In the time of visitation*: in Greek, "in due time."

-
- fast in the faith, knowing that the same suffering befalls your
 10 brethren all over the world. But the God of all grace, who
 has called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will
 himself, after we have suffered a little while, perfect, strength-
 11 en and establish us. To him is the dominion forever and
 ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION

- 12 *Farewell* By Silvanus, the faithful brother as I account
 him, I have written to you thus briefly, exhorting and testi-
 fying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firmly in it.
 13 The church which is at Babylon, chosen together with you,
 14 greets you; and so does my son Mark. Greet one another
 with a holy kiss. Grace be to you all who are in Christ. Amen.

5, 10: *Called us*: in Greek, "called you." *A little while*: another reference to the imminent second coming of Christ as in 4, 7.

5, 12: *Silvanus*: see Introduction to this epistle.

5, 13: *The Church*: in Greek, "She." *Babylon*: it is generally agreed upon that this was a symbolic name for Rome in first century apocalyptic writings by Jews and Christians (see Ap 14, 8 n). *Mark*: the evangelist.

5, 14: *Grace*: in Greek, "peace."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

INTRODUCTION

From "this is now the second epistle" (2 Pt 3, 1) it would seem that the readers of this epistle were the same as those of the first, namely, the communities of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) that are mentioned in 1 Pt 1, 1. The purpose of the second epistle is also similar to that of the first, i.e., to give, in the main, a paternal warning against false teachers. Some of the erroneous doctrines of these false teachers concerned freedom (2, 19) and the denial of Christ's second coming (3, 4ff). Their errors, however, are vaguely pointed out and cannot be identified with any known heresy.

One of the major problems of 2 Pt is its relationship with the epistle of St. Jude. Nineteen of the twenty-five verses that make up the epistle of St. Jude are found, in whole or in part, in 2 Pt. The repetition of words and ideas is augmented by the parallel development of ideas. (Compare Jude 1, 3-18 with 2 Pt 1, 5 and 2, 1-18.) The specific question is: who borrowed from whom, or who wrote first? One standard of judgment in questions of literary dependence is that the borrower usually elaborates or clarifies the original. Actually, 2 Pt seems to elaborate on Jude. Hence the majority view is that 2 Pt borrowed from Jude. In other words, the epistle of St. Jude was written first. (The annotations will indicate the borrowings.)

Of more importance than that of dependence on Jude is the problem of authorship. The conservatives champion the Petrine authorship. They find supporting evidence in 2 Pt 1, 1 where the author calls himself Peter. In 1, 16-18, the author claims to have been at the Transfiguration. In 3, 1 the inspired writer alludes to his first epistle (presumably the first epistle of Peter). In 3, 5 the author asserts equal apostolic authority with St. Paul. Those who subscribe to this opinion set down 64-67 A.D. as the probable date of composition.

Many modern scholars, on the other hand, suggest that 2 Pt is a pseudonymous work and attributed to Peter by its author. Some of the arguments on which these scholars base themselves are: 1. In flagrant opposition to the affirmation in the epistle that Peter is the author, St. Jerome writes of the current disbelief in his day that Peter was its author. 2. Scholars often interpret that the repeated doubts of the second coming of Christ referred to in 2 Pt (3, 3-4, and in other New Testament passages) arose after 70 A.D. because the early Christians had believed in a close connection between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Mt 24, 2-3). Since in 2 Pt the doubting of Christ's second coming is mentioned several times, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. must have occurred quite some time prior to this doubting. 3. In view of the majority opinion that 2 Pt depended on Jude's epistle—which, according to many,

was composed after 67 A.D.—Peter, who died between 64-67, could not have written the second epistle.

Who, then, was the author? The opinion of the modern scholars postulates that the writer was either a disciple who completed a work of Peter, incorporating into it adaptations from the epistle of Jude, or an inspired author who assumed the name of Peter to adorn his writing with the authority of the prince of the apostles. Proposed as date of composition are: 80, 90-95, the early second century and, according to several Protestants, 120-180. The Catholics who hold a second century date for the writing of 2 Pt would oppose the view that revelation ended with the death of the last apostle (about 100 A.D.) because they would interpret "apostle" in a broader sense than just to mean the twelve apostles. This interpretation takes these scholars also well into the second century.

The obvious difference in vocabulary and style used in the first and second epistle of Peter has struck many scholars. 2 Pt is written in a bookish, artificial Greek style. Its author likes rare words, he repeats words that have an especially beautiful sound, and he uses apparently incorrect expressions.

1

- ¹ *Greeting* Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained an equal privilege of faith with ourselves through the justice of our God and
² Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be given you in abundance in the knowledge of our Lord.

I. CHRISTIAN VIRTUE— ITS NECESSITY AND MOTIVES

- ³ *Life of a Christian* For indeed his divine power has granted us all things pertaining to life and piety through the knowledge of him who has called us by his own glory and power |
⁴ —through which he has granted us the very great and precious promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption
⁵ tion of that lust which is in the world. Do you accordingly on your part strive diligently to supply your faith with virtue, your virtue with knowledge, | your knowledge with self-control, your self-control with patience, your patience with
⁷ piety, | your piety with fraternal love, your fraternal love with charity.

- ⁸ *Necessity of Virtue* For if you possess these virtues and

1, 1: *Simon*: see Acts 15, 14 n. *Peter . . . an apostle*: see Introduction to this epistle on the problem of pseudonymity. *To those*: the reference is to the Christians.

1, 2: *Knowledge*: the knowledge of Jesus and of God (v. 3) is emphasized as a means of salvation, perhaps as a corrective to the false teachers.

1, 3: "His" and "him" refer to "our Lord" in v. 2. *Life*: eternal life. *Glory*: during his earthly ministry, Jesus called all men to him through the external signs of his divinity, e.g., his miracles.

1, 4: *Promises*: of eternal life (1 Pt 1, 3-5) or of the second coming (see 2 Pt 3, vv. 4, 9-10, 12-13). *So that through them . . . in the world*: a preferable reading is: "that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust and become partakers of the divine nature." The last phrase refers to participation through sanctifying grace.

1, 5: *Do you accordingly on your part*: in Greek, "for this very reason." The "reason" refers to all that Christ has granted us (vv. 3-4).

1, 6-7: There is no intended gradation of virtues.

1, 8: *For if you possess . . . render*: in Greek, "for if these things are yours and increase, they render . . ."

- they abound in you, they will render you neither inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 9 For he who lacks them is blind, groping his way, and has
 10 forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, strive even more by good works to make your calling and election sure. For if you do this, you will
 11 not fall into sin at any time. Indeed, in this way will be amply provided for you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- 12 Therefore I shall begin to remind you always of these things; although indeed you know them and are well established in the present truth. As long as I am in this
 13 tabernacle, I think it right to arouse you by a reminder,
 14 knowing as I do that the putting off of my tabernacle is at hand, just as our Lord Jesus Christ signified
 15 to me. Moreover I will endeavor that even after my death you may often have occasion to call these things to mind.
- 16 **Sovereignty of Christ** For we were not following fictitious tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his
 17 grandeur. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when from out the majestic glory a voice came down to him, speaking thus:
 "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."
- 18 And this voice we ourselves heard borne from heaven when we were with him on the holy mount.
- 19 And we have the word of prophecy, surer still, to which

1, 9: *Groping*: in Greek, "seeing only what is near." *Cleansed*: through baptism.

1, 10: *By good works*: not in the Greek. *You will not fall into sin at any time*: this does not mean that the inspired writer believes in impeccability. He may mean: the danger of falling into sin diminishes in the measure that one practices Christian virtues. Compare 1 Jn 3, 6 n.

1, 13: *Tabernacle*: in Greek, "tent" and it means the body.

1, 14: See Jn 21, 18 n on Christ's prediction of the death of Peter.

1, 15: This verse may refer to measures for the circulation of the epistle, or it may be an allusion to the Gospel of Mark, for Peter told Mark orally many things about the life and deeds of Jesus.

1, 16-18: The hope in the second coming of Jesus was no fictitious tale because "Peter" saw the transfiguration that foreshadowed the splendor of Christ's return.

1, 17: See Mt 17, 1-8 n on the transfiguration.

1, 18: *The holy mount*: of the transfiguration. See Mk 9, 1 n.

1, 19: *The word of prophecy*: besides the transfiguration as a guarantee of the second coming, there are the Old Testament prophecies

- you do well to attend, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your
 20 hearts. This, then, you must understand first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation.
 21 For not by will of man was prophecy brought at any time; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

II. FALSE TEACHERS

2

- 1 *Punishment of Lying Teachers* But there were false prophets also among the people, just as among you there will be lying teachers who will bring in destructive sects. They even disown the Lord who bought them, thus bringing upon them-
 2 selves swift destruction. And many will follow their wanton
 3 conduct, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned. And out of greed they will with deceitful words use you for their gain. Their condemnation, passed of old, is not made void, and their destruction does not slumber.

- 4 *Warning from the Past* For God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but dragged them down by infernal ropes to Tartarus, and delivered them to be tortured and kept in

that did not directly predict the second coming of Christ but were reinterpreted in relation to the second coming as explained in Acts 3, 21 n. *Lamp shining in a dark place*: the Christians are to heed the "Old Testament prophecies" because they shine like a lamp in a dark place in the period preceding Christ's second coming. *Day dawns . . . morning star*: allusions to the splendor of the second coming.

1, 20-21: Although the sacred writer exhorts the Christians to heed the "Old Testament prophecies" relative to the second coming (v. 19), the modern reader must not think that it was easy for them to interpret these Old Testament passages.

1, 20: *Is made by private interpretations*: no prophecy (of the Old Testament) is left up to one's personal explanation.

2, 1: *Among the people*: of the ancient Hebrews. *Bought*: redeemed as in 1 Pt 1, 18.

2, 2: *The way of truth*: Christ's teachings.

2, 3: *Their condemnation . . . does not slumber*: see Jude 1, 4 n.

2, 4-10: The condemnation of the false teachers (v. 3) recalls the role of divine justice in the punishment of the rebellious angels, the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra.

2, 4: For par see Jude 1, 6 n. *But dragged them down . . . for judgment*: a preferable translation from the Greek is: "but cast them down to Tartarus and delivered them to the dark pits to await judgment." *Tartarus*: this rare biblical term comes from Greek mythology, according to which the name Tartarus was given to the subterranean abode where the Titans and the enemies of the gods were

5 custody for judgment. Nor did he spare the ancient world, but preserved (with seven others) Noe a herald of justice, when he brought a flood upon the world of the impious.
 6 And he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes, thus making them an example to those who in the future should live impiously; |
 7 whereas he delivered just Lot, who was distressed by the
 8 lawless behavior of the wicked. For by what that just man saw and heard while dwelling among them, they tormented
 9 his just soul day after day with their wicked deeds. The Lord knows how to deliver the God-fearing from temptation and to reserve the wicked for torment on the day of
 10 judgment, | but especially those who follow the flesh in unclean lust and despise authority.

11 *The Vices of Heresy* Rash and self-willed, such men in their deriding do not regard majesty; | whereas angels, though greater in strength and power, do not bring against
 12 themselves an abusive charge. But these men, like irrational animals created by nature for capture and destruction, deride what they do not understand, and will perish in their own
 13 corruption, | receiving thereby the recompense of their wrongdoing. They regard as pleasure their daylight revelry; they are spots and blemishes, they abound in wantonness
 14 while banqueting with you. They have eyes full of adultery and turned unceasingly towards sin. They entice unstable souls; they have their hearts exercised in covetousness; they
 15 are children of a curse. They have forsaken the right way and have gone astray; they have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of wrong-
 16 doing. But he was rebuked for his madness; a dumb beast of burden spoke with the voice of a man and checked the folly of the prophet.
 17 These men are springs without water and mists driven

punished. Jews and Christians gradually adopted the word Tartarus to signify that section of *sheol* where the fallen angels and sinners were punished. Tartarus finally acquired the meaning of the term "hell" used by Christians.

2, 5: Compare 1 Pt 3, 20.

2, 6: See par Jude 1, 7.

2, 10: *Deriding . . . majesty*: "angels." For par see Jude 1, 8 n.

2, 11: For par see Jude 1, 9 n.

2, 12: For par see Jude 1, 10 n.

2, 13: For par see Jude 1, 12 n.

2, 15: *Balaam*: as in Jude 1, 11.

2, 17: See par Jude 1, 12-13.

- by storms; the blackness of darkness is reserved for them.
- 18 For by high-sounding, empty words they entice with sensual allurements of carnal passion those who are just escaping from such as live in error. They promise them freedom, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption; for by whatever a man is overcome, of this also he is the slave.
- 20 For if after escaping the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, their latter state
- 21 has become worse for them than the former. For it were better for them not to have known the way of justice, than having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment
- 22 delivered to them. For what that true proverb says has happened to them, "A dog returns to his vomit," and, "A sow even after washing wallows in the mire."

3

- 1 *The Second Coming* This, beloved, is now the second epistle that I am writing to you wherein I stir up your
- 2 pure mind to remembrance, | that you may be mindful of what I formerly preached of the words of the holy prophets and of your apostles, which are the precepts of the Lord and
- 3 Savior. This first you must know, that in the last days there will come deceitful scoffers, men walking according to their
- 4 own lusts, | saying, "Where is the promise or his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they

2, 18: See par Jude 1, 16. *Those who are just escaping . . . error:* those Christian converts who just began to abandon their former pagan ways.

2, 19: *Freedom:* see Jude 1, 4 n on the same error. *By whatever a man . . . is the slave:* reminiscent of Jn 8, 34: "everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."

2, 20: See a similar idea in Mt 12, 45.

2, 21: Compare Lk 12, 47-48.

2, 22a: From Prv 26, 11.

2, 22b: From a nonbiblical source.

3, 1: *The second epistle:* a probable reference to 1 Pt (see Introduction to this epistle).

3, 2: *Of what I formerly preached . . . of the Savior:* a preferable reading of the Greek is: "of the predictions of the holy prophets and the precepts of the Lord and Savior through your apostles." See par Jude 1, 17.

3, 3: See par Jude 1, 18.

3, 4: The scoffers doubt the second coming of Jesus. See the second reason in the Introduction why this epistle is pseudonymous. *Fathers fell asleep:* the first generation of Christians died and still Jesus has not returned, say the false teachers. *All things continue*

- 5 were from the beginning of creation." For of this they are willfully ignorant, that there were heavens long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by water through the word of God. By these means the world that then was, 6 deluged with water, perished. But the heavens that now are, and the earth, by that same word have been stored up, being reserved for fire against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
- 7 But, beloved, do not be ignorant of this one thing, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a 8 thousand years as one day. The Lord does not delay in his promises, but for your sake is long-suffering, not wishing that any should perish but that all should turn to re- 9 pentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; at that time the heavens will pass away with great violence, and the elements will be dissolved with heat, and the earth, and the works that are in it, will be burned up.

. . . *creation*: the false teachers point to the sameness of the world in support of their denial of the second coming.

3, 5-7: The scoffers purposely ignore that the world ("heavens . . . and on earth") was created by the word of God (Gn 1, 1-9) and then perished through the deluge (2 Pt 3, 6). The sacred author "refutes" the charge of the sameness "from the beginning of creation" (v. 4). Furthermore, God's word preserves the world but he can destroy it again (v. 7). *Fire*: see 3, 10b-13 n.

3, 8: Time is judged differently by God than by men is the reply to those who scoff at the long wait for Christ's second coming.

3, 9: Jesus does not delay his second coming, he merely wants to give everyone a chance to repent before his return.

The verse alludes to the Jewish idea that sin delays the coming but holiness hastens it. See this idea also in Acts 3, 20.

3, 10: *But the day . . . as a thief*: the same teaching as in the synoptic Gospels (Mt 24, 42f).

3, 10b-13: The majority Catholic opinion apparently interprets "fire" in the literal sense. The second coming will be accompanied by the end of the world through material fire. One main reason for this interpretation is the inspired author's insistence on fire.

Few Catholics interpret fire in the Old Testament metaphorical sense of God's judgment at the end of the world. They propose that just as "water" was used as the wrapper to teach the creation of the world, so "fire" was used to teach the destruction of the world. Besides, the problem of how the world will end is scientific rather than biblical.

Regardless of the two opinions, the notion of the end of the world through fire was as common to Palestinians, including the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, as to those outside of Palestine, including the Stoics. The notion is familiar to us in the Latin hymn *Dies Irae* and Verdi's *Requiem*.

As regards the second major problem in vv. 10b-13, the renewal of the world (or the "new heavens and a new earth" v. 13), the better

- 11 Seeing therefore that all these things are to be dissolved,
 what manner of men ought you to be in holy and pious
 12 behavior, | you who await and hasten towards the coming
 of the day of God, by which the heavens, being on fire,
 will be dissolved and the elements will melt away by reason
 13 of the heat of the fire! But we look for new heavens and
 a new earth, according to his promises, wherein dwells
 justice.

CONCLUSION

- 14 *Exhortation, Doxology* Therefore, beloved, while you
 look for these things, endeavor to be found by him without
 15 spot and blameless, in peace. And regard the long-suffering
 of our Lord as salvation. Just as our most dear brother
 Paul also, according to the wisdom given him, has written
 16 to you, | as indeed he did in all his epistles, speaking in
 them of these things. In these epistles there are certain
 things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and the
 unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures
 also, to their own destruction.
 17 You therefore, brethren, since you know this before-
 hand, be on your guard lest, carried away by the error of
 18 the foolish, you fall away from your own steadfastness. But
 grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior,
 Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and to the
 day of eternity. Amen.

Catholic opinion seems to interpret this renewal in the metaphorical sense of a moral and spiritual transformation (see Is 65, 17-25 n) rather than in the material sense (see Ap 21, 1-2 n).

3, 14: *Blameless, in peace*: the universal fire is intended only for the "ungodly" (v. 7).

3, 15: See v. 9.

3, 16: *The rest of the Scriptures*: this is a classical passage showing how the sacred writer equates Paul's epistles with the inspired Old Testament.

3, 17: *The foolish*: in Greek, "the lawless."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION

Most modern scholars agree that the fourth Gospel and the first epistle of St. John were written by the same author. The two works are similar in theological ideas, vocabulary, and style. Consequently, the same period (in the nineties) is often suggested for the composition of both. Most commentators, however, believe that John's Gospel was written at an earlier date than the first epistle of John.

Since the recipients of the letter are not specified, and because of the general nature of its content, many scholars assume that it was intended for the entire church rather than for a group of communities of the church in the region which today is western Turkey.

Closely connected with the question of the author's audience is the problem of the epistle's purpose. The inspired writer does not specify the false doctrine spread by the false teachers, who are called Antichrist three times, but he alludes to their many errors. Yet, because his writing about the false doctrine remains too general, there is no agreement on the specific purpose of the epistle. See 2, 23 n.

All scholars admit the great difficulty of dividing the epistle, for ideas run into each other and repetitions are abundant. There are as many divisions of this epistle as there are scholars because, usually, none of them attempts to divide according to the mind of the inspired writer but according to clarity for present-day readers. (For the sake of convenience, the division below follows the text according to the CCD.)

Main divisions of the First Epistle of St. John are:

1. Introduction, 1, 1-4
2. God Is Light, 1, 5—2, 27
3. God Is Justice, 2, 28—4, 6
4. God Is Love, 4, 7—5, 17
5. Conclusion, 5, 18-21

INTRODUCTION

1

- 1** *The Witness to the Word of Life* I write of what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands
2 have handled: of the Word of Life. And the Life was made known and we have seen, and now testify and announce to you, the Life Eternal which was with the Father, and has ap-
3 peared to us. What we have seen and have heard we announce to you, in order that you also may have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father,
4 and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that you may rejoice, and our joy may be full.

I. GOD IS LIGHT

- 5** *Walk in Light* And the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, is this: that God is light,
6 and in him is no darkness. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and are not practising
7 the truth. But if we walk in the light as he also is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

1, 1-2: The sacred writer speaks authoritatively about Jesus.

1, 1: The unnamed writer asserts that he is writing of Jesus who "was from the beginning" of time (see John's Gospel, 1, 11), and that he heard, saw, and touched Jesus, "the Word of Life." (See Jn 1, 14 n on the "Logos.")

1, 2: The Word, Jesus, is presented as "Life Eternal." *Life Eternal . . . appeared to us*: see the same idea in Jn 5, 26 and 17, 5.

1, 3-4: *Fellowship*: the inspired author wants his readers to share with him in Jesus Christ's eternal life and thus receive joy.

1, 3: This verse says the same as Jn 17, 21.

1, 4: See Jn 15, 11.

1, 5: *God is light*: since Jesus and his Father are of the same nature (v. 3), what is true of the Son ("I am the light of the world," see Jn 8, 12 n) is true of the Father. *Darkness*: "light" means the revelation given by God, and "darkness" is the absence of the revelation of truth and goodness.

1, 6: The verse may be paraphrased thus: if we say that we share God's life and simultaneously live sinfully, we are lying, and not living according to God's revelation of truth. See Jn 3, 21 and 12, 35.

1, 7: The meaning is: if we live according to God's truth ("light"), then we are united with one another, and Christ redeems us from sin through his crucifixion.

- 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
9 and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins,
he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse
10 us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned, we
make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2

- 1 My dear children, these things I write to you in order
that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an advo-
2 cate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; | and he is a
propitiation for our sins, not for ours only but also for
those of the whole world.
- 3 *Observe the Commandments—Especially Charity* And
by this we can be sure that we know him, if we keep his
4 commandments. He who says that he knows him, and does
not keep his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in
5 him. But he who keeps his word, in him the love of God is
truly perfected; and by this we know that we are in him.
6 He who says that he abides in him, ought himself also to
walk just as he walked.
- 7 Beloved, no new commandment am I writing to you,
but an old commandment which you had from the beginning.
The old commandment is the word which you have heard.
8 Again, a new commandment I am writing to you, and this is
true both in him and in you. Because the darkness has passed

1, 8: Many scholars believe that this verse alludes to heretics who profess some kind of impeccability.

1, 10: If we claim to be sinless, we are thereby saying that God is a liar because he sent his Son to redeem us from sin. We would not be living according to truth ("Word").

2, 1: *Dear children*: this form of address is found seven times in 1 Jn and once in John's Gospel (13, 33). *Advocate*: see Jn 14, 16 n.

2, 2: *Propitiation*: expiation or atonement through Christ's sacrifice.

2, 3-4: See Jn 14, 15 n for the same idea.

2, 3: *Know*: love.

2, 5: See Jn 14, 23. *Word*: synonymous with "commandments" in v. 4. *We are in him*: we are united with God.

2, 6: *Walk*: live.

2, 7: The old commandment of love refers to the "new commandment" of Jesus that every Christian is taught. See Jn 13, 34 n.

2, 8: The "old commandment" (of v. 7) remains "new" in Jesus ("in him") insofar as he is a new exemplar of love, and the old commandment remains new in Christians since their former evil ways of sin ("darkness") have given way to virtuous ways ("light"). There are different explanations of this verse. *In you*: a better punctuation would be a comma instead of a period after "you."

away and the true light is now shining. He who says that
 9 he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in the darkness
 10 still. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and for
 11 him there is no stumbling. But he who hates his brother
 is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and he does not
 know whither he goes; because the darkness has blinded
 his eyes.

12 **Reasons for Writing** I am writing to you, dear children,
 because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.
 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who
 is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men,
 14 because you have conquered the evil one. I am writing to you,
 little ones, because you know the Father. I am writing to you,
 fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.
 I am writing to you, young men, because you are strong
 and the word of God abides in you, and you have con-
 15 quered the evil one. Do not love the world, or the things
 that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love
 16 of the Father is not in him; | because all that is in the world
 is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the
 pride of life; which is not from the Father, but from the

2, 9: He who says that he loves God ("is in the light") yet hates his brother lives according to his former pagan ways. See Jn 8, 12 n on "light" and "darkness."

2, 10: See Jn 11, 10.

2, 11: He who is uncharitable is so blinded that he loses the facility of living charitably. *Walks in the darkness*: this expression is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2, 12-14: The identity of the three groups (children, fathers, young men, in vv. 12-13 and in v. 14) is disputed. It is not clear whether the trio, which is more poetically repeated in v. 14, distinguishes three groups or whether only two classes of believers are meant, fathers and young men, who are jointly called "dear children" in v. 12 and "little ones" in v. 14.

2, 12: An assurance that sins are forgiven through the power of Jesus. Here and in the subsequent verses the assurance may be an allusion to false teachings.

2, 13: The fathers (older Christians) are assured of their correct knowledge of Jesus (see 1, 1).

2, 14: *Because you know the Father*: the readers are assured of their correct knowledge of God the Father.

2, 15: In both the Gospel of John and in this letter "world" is used to mean all human forces spearheaded by Satan, "the prince of the world" (see Jn 16, 11), in opposition to God's love.

2, 16: *The lust of the flesh*: the common interpretation explains this phrase as the longing for the abuse of eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse. *The lust of the eyes*: passions provoked by looking unseemly at sensual things. *The pride of life*: "pride" in Greek here

17 world. And the world with its lust is passing away, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

18 **Against False Teachers** Dear children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have arisen; whence we know that it is
19 the last hour. They have gone forth from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would surely have continued with us; but they were to be made manifest, that
20 not one of them is of us. But you have an anointing from
21 the Holy One and you know all things. I have not written to you as to those who do not know the truth, but as to those who know it, and because no lie is of the truth.
22 Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.
23 | No one who disowns the Son has the Father. He who

means the lowest forms of vanity (insolence, "showing off") that result from "life," i.e., material wealth or lavish living.

2, 18: *It is the last hour*: the "last hour" extends from the time of Jesus, the Messiah, to his second coming at the end of the world. *As you have heard that Antichrist is coming*: the Christians already knew that the Antichrist would arrive before the end of the world (2 Thes 2, 3-4). *So now many antichrists have arisen*: whether 2 Thes 2, 3-4 mean one antichrist or many antichrists is not certain; here several are meant.

2, 19: The antichrists of v. 18 are apostatized teachers who had never been true Christians.

2, 20: Because the Christians received the Holy Spirit ("an anointing") from God or Jesus ("the Holy One"), they know the true teaching as opposed to the false teaching of the apostates (see Jn 14, 26).

2, 22: *Jesus is the Christ*: Jesus is the Messiah.

2, 23: See Jn 5, 23. *No one who disowns the Son has the Father*: no one may deny that the Son is divine and yet remain united with the Father because the Father is known through the Son (see Jn 14, 7). In 1 and 2 Jn there are sporadic reports on the false teachers' denials that Jesus was the Messiah and the divine Son of God. These denials bear resemblance to teachings of the Gnostic heretic, Cerinthus, who lived about 100 A.D. at Ephesus. St. Irenaeus later listed some of the heresies of Cerinthus, e.g.: Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary; a heavenly Messiah descended upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan river but returned to heaven before the passion and death of Christ; hence, Jesus was not the Messiah nor the divine Son of God.

The consensus of the scholars is that there are not enough indications in 1 and 2 Jn to conclude that the false teachings indicated therein refer to the heresy of Cerinthus, or to any defined form of Gnosticism. Because of this indefiniteness, some scholars, without defining the term "Gnosticism," speak of "early Gnosticism" as the target of opposition in 1 Jn especially.

- 24 confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, let that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you. If that abides in you which you have heard from the beginning, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he has given us, the life everlasting.
- 26 These things I have written to you concerning those who lead you astray. And as for you, let the anointing which you have received from him, dwell in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true and is no lie, even as it has taught you, abide in him.
- 28 And now, dear children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence, and may not shrink ashamed from him at his coming. If you know that he is just, know that everyone also who does what is just has been born of him.

II. GOD IS JUSTICE

- 3
- 1 *Children of God* Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. This is why the world does not
- 2 know us, because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like
- 3 to him, for we shall see him just as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him makes himself holy, just as he also is holy.

2, 24: See Jn 14, 23. *From the beginning*: of their conversion.

2, 25: See Jn 17, 2.

2, 27: *Anointing*: see 2, 20 n.

2, 28: Living intimately with Christ bestows confidence to meet him as judge in death or at the end of the world.

2, 29: Since God the Father justifies man, every Christian who lives righteously is thereby partaking of God's life.

3, 1: See Jn 1, 12. *Be called . . . we are*: this does not merely refer to an honorary or juridical adoption as "children of God" but it refers to a relationship that is not less real because it is supernatural. *This is why the world . . . did not know him*: the pagans do not know the supernatural relationship between Christians and God because they do not know the Father through Christ.

3, 2: *It has not yet appeared what we shall be*: it is not yet clear what man's future glory comprises. *When he appears*: it is unclear whether "he" refers to the Father or to Jesus. *We shall see him just as he is*: compare "face to face" in 1 Cor 13, 12.

3, 3: Waiting for the end helps a Christian to live a holy life.

4 Everyone who commits sin commits iniquity also; and sin
 5 is iniquity. And you know that he appeared to take our
 6 sins away, and sin is not in him. No one who abides in him
 commits sin; and no one who sins has seen him, or has
 known him.

7 *Children of the Devil* Dear children, let no one lead you
 astray. He who does what is just is just, even as he is just.
 8 He who commits sin is of the devil, because the devil sins
 from the beginning. To this end the Son of God appeared,
 9 that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is
 born of God does not commit sin, because his seed abides in
 10 him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the
 children of God and the children of the devil are made
 known.

Whoever is not just is not of God, nor is he just who
 11 does not love his brother. For this is the message that you
 have heard from the beginning, that we should love one
 12 another; | not like Cain, who was the evil one, and killed
 his brother. And wherefore did he kill him? Because his
 13 own works were wicked, but his brother's just. Do not be
 14 surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that

3, 4: *Iniquity*: or "lawlessness."

3, 5: *He*: Christ.

3, 6: *Commits sin*: one possible explanation of this difficult sentence is that no one remains united with Jesus who remains in (the state of mortal) sin. *No one who sins has seen him, or has known him*: this may allude to the false teachers who taught that one who commits mortal sins remains nonetheless intimately (supernaturally) united with God.

3, 7: "He (the Christian) who does what is just, is just even as he (Christ) is just."

3, 8: *From the beginning*: allusion to Gn 3, 15. *To this end . . . works of the devil*: compare Jn 12, 31 n.

3, 9: *Born of God . . . cannot sin*: the Christian who is spiritually born of God is not supposed to sin because God's Holy Spirit ("seed") lives in him and he cannot sin *in principle*. This is not to be interpreted to mean the impeccability of the baptized Christian because such an interpretation would contradict 1, 8. *Seed*: this is the common translation of the Greek word, but there are others, e.g., "nature," "descendants."

3, 10: *Children of God . . . children of the devil*: mankind is here divided into two classes, according to whether they are just or not. Examples of this division of mankind are also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

3, 11: *Heard from the beginning*: from the moment of their conversion. See Jn 15, 17.

3, 12: *Cain*: see Gn 4, 8.

3, 14: Their mutual love assures them that they have passed from

we have passed from death to life, because we love the
 15 brethren. He who does not love abides in death. | Every-
 one who hates his brother is a murderer. And you know
 that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 *True Charity* In this we have come to know his love, that
 he laid down his life for us; and we likewise ought to lay
 17 down our life for the brethren. He who has the goods of
 this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart
 18 to him, how does the love of God abide in him? My dear
 children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue,
 but in deed and in truth.

19 *A Good Conscience* In this we know that we are of the
 20 truth, and in his sight we set our hearts at rest. Because if
 our heart blames us, God is greater than our heart and
 21 knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us,
 22 we have confidence towards God; and whatever we ask, we
 shall receive from him, because we keep his commandments
 and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the
 name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even
 24 as he gave us commandment. And he who keeps his com-
 mandments abides in God, and God in him. And in this we
 know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has
 given us.

a life of sin to a life of grace. See Jn 5, 24. *Brethren*: in Greek, "brothers." *He who does not love abides in death*: this states negatively what the first part of the verse states positively.

3, 15: A disposition to hatred may lead to murder. Just as a murderer loses supernatural life, so may he lose it who hates his Christian brother. See Mt 5, 21-26.

3, 16: *In this . . . his love*: a clearer translation may be: "By this we have come to understand what love is." *He*: Christ. *Brethren*: "brothers."

3, 19: A clearer translation may be: "By this (love in deed, v. 18) we shall know that we are of the truth (that we belong to God) and reassure ourselves in his sight."

3, 20: If a Christian is aware of sin, he should rest assured of God's merciful forgiveness.

3, 21: If a Christian is not aware of sin, he should have even greater confidence. *Whatever we ask . . . commandments*: see Jn 14, 13-15.

3, 23: See Jn 6, 29.

3, 24: See Jn 15, 26.

4

- ¹ *True and False Spirits* Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone forth into the world.
- ² By this is the spirit of God known: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that severs Jesus, is not of God, but is of Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he is coming, and now is already in the world.
- ⁴ You are of God, dear children, and have overcome him, because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. They are of the world; | therefore of the world they speak and the world listens to them. | We are of God. He who knows God listens to us; he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

III. GOD IS LOVE

- ⁷ *Love Unites Us with God* Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent his only-begotten

4, 1: The sacred writer tells his Christian readers not to believe every person ("spirit") but to test the "spirits." These "spirits" are probably synonymous with "false prophets." *Test the spirits*: an expression which is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

4, 2: *The "spirit of God"*: the test of a true prophet is his belief that Jesus became man. Such a true prophet bears the mark of God. (See 2, 23 n on Cerinthian Gnosticism.)

4, 3: *Severs Jesus*: in Greek, "does not confess Jesus." Any prophet who does not confess that Jesus is the Messiah is not united with God but has an antichrist-spirit. *Of whom you have heard that he is coming . . . in the world*: see 2, 18 n.

4, 4: *Overcome him*: in Greek, "overcome them," the false prophets (v. 1). *Who is in you*: God. *Who is in the world*: Satan. *They are of the world*: the false prophets of v. 1.

4, 6: *He who knows God listens to us*: follows the traditional teaching of the Church. *We know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*: this division of mankind is reminiscent of the Dead Sea Scrolls. See 3, 10 n.

4, 7: Every Christian is (spiritually) born of God and knows (loves) God.

4, 8-9: *God is love*: this is not a philosophical definition of God's nature. It was a characteristic Hebrew trait to describe what one does rather than what one is. God acted out of love for mankind when he sent his Son (v. 9).

4, 9: See In 3, 16.

- 10 Son into the world that we may live through him. In this is the love, not that we have loved God, but that he has first loved us, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins.
- 11 Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- 12 No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God
- 13 abides in us and his love is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us
- 14 of his Spirit. And we have seen, and do testify, that the
- 15 Father has sent his Son to be Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and
- 16 he in God. And we have come to know, and have believed, the love that God has in our behalf. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
- 17 In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so
- 18 are we also in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear brings punishment. And
- 19 he who fears is not perfected in love. Let us therefore love,
- 20 because God first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God, whom he does
- 21 not see? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.

5

- 1 ***The Basis of Love*** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves him
- 2 who begot, loves also the one begotten of him. In this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God
- 3 and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not

4, 10: *In this is the love*: this is what love comprises.

4, 12: *No one has ever seen God*: John's Gospel (1, 18) says the same.

4, 15: See 2, 23 n.

4, 17: Love increases in the Christian to such a degree that he faces judgment day not with fear but with confidence because he strives to please God just as Christ did. See Jn 8, 29.

4, 21: See Jn 15, 17.

5, 1: He who believes that Jesus is the Messiah ("the Christ") is (spiritually) born of God, and he who loves God ("him who begot") loves also Jesus ("the one begotten of him").

5, 3: See Jn 14, 15.

4 burdensome. Because all that is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our
5 faith. Who is there that overcomes the world if not he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 *Witnesses to Christ* This is he who came in water and in blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness
7 that Christ is the truth. For there are three that bear witness [in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and
8 these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth]: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these
9 three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God which is greater, that he has borne witness concerning his Son.
10 He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He who does not believe the Son, makes him a liar; because he does not believe the witness that God has borne concerning his Son.

11 And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal
12 life; and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has the life. He who has not the Son has not the life.

13 These things I am writing to you that you may know that you have eternal life—you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

14 *Confidence in Prayer* And the confidence that we have

5, 4: If we judge by 2, 13-14 and 4, 4, all those who are spiritually born of God overcome the world's evil forces that are spearheaded by Satan.

5, 6: According to one opinion, Jesus came through the water of baptism and the blood of the cross. Another opinion is that Jesus came through the water and blood of the cross (Jn 19, 34). *That bear witness that Christ is the truth*: in Greek, "The Spirit testifies to this because the Spirit is the truth."

5, 7-8: The words in brackets should be omitted since they do not belong in the original text. They are known as the Johannine "Comma" or "clause." Most scholars agree that this clause first appeared in the fourth century as a marginal gloss in a Latin Bible and gradually crept into the scriptural text.

5, 7: *That bear witness*: a better translation is: "who testify to this."

5, 8: *Are one*: are in agreement.

5, 9: *For this is the testimony . . . concerning his Son*: read, "for the testimony of God comprises what he himself has testified concerning his Son."

5, 13: *In the name*: an Hebraic way of saying, "in the person."

5, 14: See Jn 15. 7 n.

- towards him is this, that if we ask anything according to
 15 his will, he hears us. And we know that he hears us what-
 ever we ask; we know that the requests we make of him are
 granted.
 16 He who knows his brother is committing a sin that is
 not unto death, shall ask, and shall give life to him who
 does not commit a sin unto death. There is sin unto death;
 17 I do not mean that anyone should ask as to that. All law-
 lessness is sin, and there is a sin unto death.

CONCLUSION

- 18 We know that no one who is born of God commits sin;
 but the Begotten of God preserves him and the evil one does
 19 not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole
 20 world is in the power of the evil one. And we know that the
 Son of God has come and has given us understanding, that
 we may know the true God and may be in his true Son. He
 is the true God and eternal life.
 21 Dear children, guard yourselves from the idols. Amen.

5, 16: The readers of this epistle knew what its author meant by "a sin that is not unto death" but we do not know it. He exhorts them to pray for the Christians who committed such a sin. *There is sin unto death . . . as to that*: the Christians are not encouraged to pray for those who committed a "sin unto death." Many scholars interpret "sin unto death" as an exceptionally grave mortal sin, e.g., final impenitance when dying, or adamant apostasy as that of the "false prophets" (4, 1) or of the "antichrists" (2, 18).

5, 17: *A sin unto death*: this is the reading in the Latin Bible (Vg.), but the better Greek reading is "a sin *not* unto death."

5, 18: See 3, 9 n. *The Begotten of God*: Jesus (Jn 1, 18). *The evil one*: Satan.

5, 20: *May be in his true Son*: there are several other translations of this phrase.

5, 21: *Amen*: not in the Greek.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN INTRODUCTION

In this epistle as well as in the third the writer calls himself "the presbyter." Many Catholics maintain that he is the same author who also wrote the fourth Gospel and 1 Jn, namely, St. John the Apostle. Arguments in favor of this view are based on the similarity of vocabulary, style, and ideas found in these four works, and on tradition.

There is agreement among many non-Catholic scholars that the same hand, the presbyter (or "Elder"), is responsible for all four works, but the Elder is interpreted as a disciple of John the Apostle. They say further that both John the Apostle and his disciple bore the same name and lived in the same place and at the same time. The main argument for interpreting the Elder as John's disciple is based on an interpretation of Papias, whose writings appeared in the second century. Papias seems to distinguish two Johns.

Although Catholic scholars often concede the argument based on Papias, they point to a statement of St. Irenaeus, and to a cross section of tradition from the second century, which claim St. John the Apostle as author of all four works.

The dispute, however, is literary not doctrinal. The date of both 2 and 3 Jn is generally placed in the nineties. A few scholars hold, but without sufficient proof, that 3 Jn was written before the rest of the "Johannine literature" (Ap, John's Gospel, 1, 2 Jn). The occasion for the writing of 2 and 3 Jn seemed to be the same as for 1 Jn, that is, the spreading of false doctrine by false teachers among the Christians. The Elder encourages his readers to adhere to the true teaching.

- 1 Greeting** The presbyter to the Elect Lady and to her children whom I love in truth—and not I alone, but also all
2 who have known the truth— | for the sake of the truth
3 which abides in us, and will be with us forever: | grace, mercy and peace be with you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

TEACHING OF THE APOSTLE

- 4 Brotherly Love** I rejoiced greatly that I found some of thy children walking in truth, according to the command-
5 ment that we have received from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but that which we have had from the beginning, that
6 we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, that, just as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

- 7 Against False Teachers** For many deceivers have gone forth into the world who do not confess Jesus as the Christ coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist.
8 Look to yourselves, that you do not lose what you have

1, 1-3: The salutation extended by "the presbyter" to the recipients is characteristic of a letter or epistle. Notice that this epistolary trait is lacking in the introduction to 1 Jn.

1, 1: *The presbyter*: the Greek word means "ancient" or "elder" and is here used as an honorific title. *The Elect Lady*: this title does not seem to refer to an individual person, a real "Lady Electra" or "Elect Kyria." The title is better interpreted as a symbolic name for one particular church or a community of the churches in what is now western Turkey.

1, 3: *Truth and love*: the principal themes of this epistle.

1, 4: *Walking in truth*: a Semitic expression similar in meaning to "to walk in the light" (1 Jn 1, 7). *The commandment . . . from the Father*: a commandment of belief in Christ and Christian charity as stated in 1 Jn 3, 23.

1, 5: The thought is about the same as in 1 Jn 2, 7.

1, 6: See Jn 14, 15 n for the meaning of "keep my commandments." *In it*: this may refer to "love" or to "commandment." There are various probable translations for the second part of v. 6.

1, 7: See 1 Jn 4, 3. *The deceiver and the Antichrist*: each of these terms personifies "all deceivers." See 1 Jn 2, 23 n on Cerinthian Gnosticism.

1, 8: *What you have worked for*: many textual critics prefer

-
- 9 worked for, but that you may receive a full reward. Anyone who advances and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, has not God; he who abides in the doctrine, he has both
 10 the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, or
 11 say to him, Welcome. For he who says to him, Welcome, is sharer in his evil works.

CONCLUSION

- 12 Though I have much to write to you, I do not wish to do so with paper and ink; for I hope to be with you and to speak face to face, that your joy may be full.
 13 The children of thy sister Elect greet thee.

"what *we* have worked for," to mean: do not lose the teachings for which we have worked so hard to make known. *Reward*: the thought resembles, "your reward is in heaven" (Mt 5, 12).

1, 9: *Anyone . . . has not God*: the Elder alludes to the false teachers saying, in other words, that anyone who claims spiritual progress yet does not preserve the teachings of Christ is not spiritually united with God. All of v. 9 contains the same teaching as Jn 2, 22-23.

1, 10-11: It would be anachronistic to use these verses, or any similar biblical passage, against ecumenism because they were not meant for all times, places and circumstances.

1, 10: The teaching of Jesus is repeatedly given as the criterion for sifting true from false teachers. See 1 Jn 4, 1-3.

1, 12: *Paper*: papyrus.

1, 13: The members of the Elder's community greet the members of their sister community, i.e., the community of the "Elect Lady."

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN

INTRODUCTION

¹ **Salutation** The presbyter to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

² **Praise of Gaius** Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers.

³ I rejoiced greatly when some brethren came and bore witness

⁴ to thy truth, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the

⁵ truth. Beloved, thou dost in accordance with faith whatever thou workest for the brethren, and that even when they are

⁶ strangers. They have borne witness to thy love before the church. Thou wilt do well to see them off on their journey in

⁷ a manner worthy of God. For on behalf of the Name they

⁸ have gone forth, taking nothing from the pagans. We therefore ought to support such as these, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth.

1, 1-15: See Introduction to the Second Epistle of St. John.

1, 1: *The presbyter*: for explanation see 2 Jn 1, 1 n. *Gaius*: it is unknown whether this influential Christian is identical with the Gaius mentioned in Acts 19, 29 and 20, 4. There is no indication that Gaius was a priest.

1, 2: *Soul*: religious life.

1, 3: *Brethren*: "brothers," perhaps the itinerant preachers mentioned in vv. 6-7. They brought word to the Elder about the orthodoxy of Gaius ("truth"). On "walking in the truth" see 2 Jn 1, 4 n.

1, 4: The verse implies that in spite of false teachings the members of the community have remained faithful to Christ's teachings. *My children*: the Elder calls them so either because he founded their Church or because they are under his charge.

1, 5: The meaning is that Gaius acts loyally when he helps itinerant preachers, especially since they are strangers to him.

1, 6: The Elder exhorts Gaius to continue to treat the same or other itinerant preachers with hospitality. *See them off on their journey*: in those days, a send-off connoted that a departing group would be supplied with provisions, that guide(s) would be provided for part of the journey, and that recommendations to people in the locality to be visited would be given. *In a manner worthy of God*: because they preach his message.

1, 7: *Name*: Jesus.

1, 8: This verse is reminiscent of "for the laborer deserves his wages" (1k 10, 7).

- ⁹ *Diotrephes and Demetrius* I would have written perhaps to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to have the first place among them, does not receive us. Therefore if I come, I will recall to mind his works, prating against us with evil words; and as if this were not enough for him, he himself does not receive the brethren, and those who do so he hinders, and casts them out of the church.
- ¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate evil, but that which is good. He who does what is good is of God; he who does what is evil has not seen God. Witness is borne to Demetrius by all, and by the truth itself, yes, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

CONCLUSION

- ¹³ I had much to write to thee; but I do not want to write to thee with pen and ink. But I hope to see thee shortly, and we will speak face to face.
- ¹⁵ Peace be to thee. The friends greet thee. Greet the friends by name.

1, 9: *I would have written perhaps*: in Greek, "I wrote something." This is a reference to either a lost letter or, perhaps, to 2 Jn which apparently had no effect because of the attitude of Diotrephes. *Diotrephes*: his name means "nourished by Zeus." Diotrephes was most probably a legitimately established bishop of his community, but he became too ambitious and insubordinate and, therefore, refused to receive the Elder or his letter.

1, 10: This verse seems to mean: if the Elder comes, he will denounce Diotrephes before the community and punish him accordingly.

1, 11: *He who does what is evil has not seen God*: for the explanation of the false teaching that is refuted here see 1 Jn 3, 6 n.

1, 12: *Demetrius*: ("belonging to Demeter," the mother-earth goddess). Demetrius may have been the Elder's letter carrier or one of the preachers whom the Elder recommends to the charity of Gaius. *Truth*: three of several interpretations of "truth" here are: Jesus himself ("I am the truth"); the Holy Spirit; or the gospel message (the response to which is the criterion by which Christians are judged).

1, 13-14: The conclusion is almost identical with that of 2 Jn 1, 12.

1, 15: *Greet the friends by name*: since Diotrephes would not permit Gaius (v. 1) to communicate the Elder's greetings to the assembled community, the Elder asks Gaius to greet the members individually.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION

The letter was written to combat false "Christian" teachers who preached the denial of Christ and taught licentiousness (see 1, 4 n). The scattered clues in the epistle do not suffice to define their teaching precisely.

Jude's readers may have been members of several communities rather than of one church since there is no specific introductory greeting. Most commentators believe that the readers were Christians converted from Judaism. Among the reasons for this belief are that Jude gives proofs from the Old Testament, and from Jewish apocalyptic literature. In addition, some of his sources are legends. No one knows where those readers lived, but Syria is the preferred choice.

The author of the epistle calls himself "the brother of James" (v. 1). Since James is the "brother of Jesus" (see Mk 6, 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon?"), Jude is, then, also the "brother" of Jesus.

Jude is not an apostle, for in v. 17 he differentiates himself from "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." The better opinion among modern scholars distinguishes this Jude from Jude the Apostle.

Opinions on the date of writing of this epistle range from before St. Peter's death in the sixties to 80 A.D. Protestant scholars often date it about 150 A.D.

The style of the letter is a fairly good example of idiomatic *koine* Greek. Jude writes simply, energetically, and graphically. One characteristic of his style is the frequent placing of words and phrases into groups of three (see v. 2).

Hardly anything is known about the personality of Jude. It is not even known whether he traveled outside of Palestine. It is known, however, that two of Jude's grandsons headed four church communities, most likely in Palestine, during Trajan's reign (98-117). Under the Emperor Domitian (81-96) they had been tried on "charges" of being descended from Jesus but were freed as politically harmless.

The Roman liturgy celebrates the feast of Sts. Simon and Jude on October 28.

INTRODUCTION

- ¹ **Purpose of Address** Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James, to the called who have been loved in
² God the Father and preserved for Christ Jesus: | mercy and peace and charity be given you in abundance.
³ Beloved, while I was making every endeavor to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith
⁴ once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have stealthily entered in, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men who turn the grace of God into wantonness and disown our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

I. WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

- ³ **Divine Judgments** But I desire to remind you, though once for all you have come to know all things, that Jesus, who saved the people from the land of Egypt, the next time

1, 1: *The brother of James*: See Introduction to this epistle. *The called*: the converts.

1, 3-18: On the problem of the relationship between these verses and 2 Pt 1, 5 and 2, 1-18 see Introduction to the Second Epistle of St. Peter.

1, 3: Jude had been preparing a different kind of letter, but the activity of the "ungodly men" (v. 4) made it necessary to write this exhortation. *About our common salvation*: probably about the teachings on salvation as known from the Gospels. *Saints*: Christians.

1, 4: *Certain men have stealthily entered in*: although other religions had their itinerant preachers, the preachers here seem to be false Christian teachers who deceived some unwary Christian followers. *Were marked out for this condemnation*: not these individual men but those of their kind were condemned by Henoch (see vv. 14-15) and by the apostles (see vv. 17-19). *Who turn the grace of God into wantonness*: they misinterpreted the freedom of the gospel ("grace" as used in Rom 6, 14) to mean licentiousness. *Master*: the Greek title *despotes*, ordinarily used of God, indicates here the divinity of Jesus. Since "Lord" also means divinity, maybe the false teachers denied ("disown") the divinity or "majesty" of Jesus (v. 8).

1, 5: Jude's readers had been fully instructed to know that, although Jesus (insofar as he pre-existed as the second person of the Trinity) liberated the Chosen People from Egypt, he destroyed them when they disbelieved (see Nm 14, 35). In vv. 6-7 two more admonishing examples against the false teachers are presented. *Jesus*: other Greek manuscripts read "he," or "the Lord," or "God."

6 destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels also who did not preserve their original state, but forsook their abode, he has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for 7 the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities which like them committed sins of immorality and practised unnatural vice, have been made an example, undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

8 *Evil Life of Heretics* In like manner do these men also 9 defile the flesh, disregard authority, deride majesty. Yet when Michael the archangel was fiercely disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, he did not venture to bring against him an accusation of blasphemy, but said, "May the Lord rebuke thee." But these men deride whatever they do not know; and the things they know by instinct like the dumb 10 beasts, become for them a source of destruction. Woe to them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and have rushed on thoughtlessly into the error of Balaam for the sake 11 of gain, and have perished in the rebellion of Core. These men are stains on their feasts, banqueting together without

1, 6: *Original state*: of intimacy with God. *Forsook their abode*: the nature of the sin is not given. *Kept in . . . chains . . . darkness . . . judgment . . . day*: Jude here depends on the apocryphal book of Henoch.

1, 7: A reference to Gn 19, 4ff.

1, 8: After "these men" the Greek adds "in their (so-called) ecstasies." *Defile the flesh*: the same as "wantonness" in v. 4. *Deride majesty*: in Greek, "glories." Many scholars understand "glories" to mean angels.

1, 9: In contrast with the false teachers, who disrespected the angels (v. 8), not even Michael, who had a perfect right to ridicule the devil, stooped so low to do so.

Jude refers to a second century (A.D.) apocryphal book called *The Assumption of Moses*. The part that is extant does not contain the episode described here. The scholars, therefore, do not know what caused the dispute between Michael and the devil. Many theories, though, have been spawned, based on the account of the death of Moses (Dt 34, 5-6).

The use of apocryphal or even pagan writings in no way militates against the Catholic notions of inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible.

1, 10: In contrast with Michael (v. 9), these men deride the angels (v. 8) about whom they are ignorant. Moreover, what they do understand (regarding sexual pleasure) they use to their own moral destruction.

1, 11: *Cain*: he is taken here as the type of a sinner in general, especially as a libertine (Gn 4, 8). *Balaam*: a reference to Nm 31, 16. *Core*: a symbol of an heretical rebel (Nm 16).

1, 12: These false teachers are a disgrace to the Christian repasts. *Twice dead*: a hyperbole.

fear, looking after themselves; clouds without water, carried about by the winds; trees in the fall, unfruitful, twice dead, 13 uprooted; | wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom the storm of darkness has been reserved forever.

14 *Judgment of Heretics* Now of these also Henoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord 15 has come with thousands of his holy ones | to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the impious of all their impious works, and of all the hard things that impious sinners 16 have spoken against him." These are grumbling murmurers walking according to their lusts. And haughty in 17 speech, they cultivate people for the sake of gain. But as for you, beloved, be mindful of the words that have been spoken 18 beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, | who kept saying to you that at the end of time there will come 19 scoffers, walking impiously according to their lusts. These are they who set themselves apart, sensual men, not having the Spirit.

II. ADMONITIONS FOR CHRISTIANS

20 *Perseverance and Charity* But as for you, beloved, build up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the 21 Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for 22 the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting. And 23 some, who are judged, reprove; | but others, save, snatching

1, 13: *Wandering stars*: for the ancients, comets were a sign of catastrophe.

1, 14-15: The quotation is from the apocryphal book of Henoch 1, 9. Henoch is listed in this book as the "seventh (patriarch) from Adam."

Henoch's prophecy of the final coming of God with his host of angels to judge "impious sinners" is applied by Jude to the false teachers.

1, 17: *Words . . . spoken . . . by the apostles*: a reference to oral tradition.

1, 18: *At the end of time*: an expression found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

1, 19: *Who set themselves apart*: another equally probable reading in the Greek is: "Who bring about division."

1, 22-23: Textual critics find it difficult to decide which text is more original, the long one (given here) or a shorter one.

1, 22: *And some, . . . reprove*: a better translation is: "And persuade some who are doubtful."

1, 23: *Fire*: see 2 Pt 3, 10b-13 n. *And to others . . . soiled by the flesh*: and to others who are too deeply steeped in heresy as to

them from the fire. And to others be merciful with fear, hating even the garment which is soiled by the flesh.

CONCLUSION

- 24 Now to him who is able to preserve you without sin and
to set you before the presence of his glory, without blemish,
25 in gladness, | to the only God our Savior, through Jesus
Christ our Lord, belong glory and majesty, dominion and
authority, before all time, and now, and forever. Amen.

want help, be merciful, yet loathe their evil ways and even their tunic (a hyperbole) that is soiled (morally) by the flesh (an allusion to the contamination of the lepers' clothes by leprous skin, see Lv 13, 47f).

1, 25: This doxology, according to a famous scholar, is the most beautiful in the New Testament.

THE APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE

INTRODUCTION

The opinion of St. Irenaeus that Apocalypse was written at the end of the reign of the Roman emperor, Domitian, in the nineties of the first century A.D. is nowadays accepted by the majority of commentators.

According to Ap 1, 9 the author received the inspiration to write Apocalypse while in exile on Patmos, the Greek island in the south-eastern Aegean Sea, but it does not necessarily follow that he was actually on the island when he wrote the book. Besides, there is no historical evidence to bear out the occasional assertion that the author was condemned to work in the mines of Patmos, for there were no mines on the island. See 1, 9 n.

Although the author calls himself John four times in the book, this does not specify which John wrote the Apocalypse. The traditional view maintains that John the Apostle, bishop of Ephesus, wrote it. Contrary to the traditional view, many scholars (chiefly Protestants) hold John the Presbyter (Elder) of Ephesus for its author. One of the valid arguments in support of their view is that the Apocalypse, or the Book of Revelation, and the fourth Gospel are appreciably different in language, style, and especially in thought. The traditional view provides no adequate answer to this objection; it does, however, point out that the different forms of literature called Gospel and Apocalypse besides the influence of the different times during which they were composed may account for the dissimilarity of the two works.

Most scholars agree that Apocalypse was written as one unified piece. Though admitting that the parallelism between chapters 4—7 and 12—16, among other peculiarities, in addition to the sporadic incoherent sections speak against unity, the scholars judge all this to be indicative of the characteristics common to apocalyptic literature. For the purpose of explaining these characteristics, a minority advocates the view that Apocalypse was partly written at the time of Nero (54-68) and partly during Vespasian's reign (69-79). This view is not gaining support from scholars.

To understand why Apocalypse was written, it is necessary to peer into the background of the times. The Christians recalled with legitimate pride their Master's triumph in his death, resurrection, and ascension. These stirring events were succeeded by the momentous manifestations of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the extraordinary influence wrought by his bestowing the charismatic gifts of tongues and eloquence of interpretation, which the Christian preachers used to full advantage in making converts. The Good News seemed well on its way to spread throughout the world. "You shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and *even to the very ends of the earth*" (Acts 1, 8).

While the Christians expected day by day the coming of our Lord to establish his kingdom on earth, the charismatic gifts, the ever more numerous conversions, and the steadily growing intensity of religious life seemed in the eyes of the Christians to justify the delay of his return in glory.

Instead of the fulfillment of their expectation came the decree of Domitian, which launched the first universal Christian persecution, strangling with it not only the hope for expansion of the Church but striking at its very roots, and instead of advancing to a final resplendent victory the followers of Christ seemed to be facing defeat.

Looking at persecution from the Christians' standpoint, it was not normal that evil should go unpunished. Why, then, was vengeance delayed? According to the author, ". . . until the number of their . . . brethren . . . be complete" was the answer to their cry for vengeance (see 6, 10-11 n), and the same answer was also the reason for the continuous prolongation of the last days separating the resurrection of Christ from his glorious second coming. In other words, John wrote to the Christians to console them and encourage them to persevere in their faith in the face of persecution. God will eventually punish the persecutors and reward the faithful. The author's main doctrine is: Christ is the absolute King of the world; *his* kingdom alone is assured final victory. This is the Christian meaning of history.

Before reading about the literary form of Apocalypse, our Introduction to the Book of Daniel in the companion volume of the Old Testament should be consulted for the description of an apocalypse and its distinction from a prophecy. The characteristics of the apocalyptic literary form explain why Apocalypse is the most enigmatic book of the Bible.

Although the entire book was intelligible to its original readers, the strangest characteristic of apocalyptic literary form to western readers is its visions. These visions, often expounded by angels, are the key to understanding Apocalypse. The author does not mean to say he received ecstatic mystical visions directly from God like St. John of the Cross. The visions are described in traditional literary figures of speech, selected by the author with particular care to convey his message. See Ap 13, 2 n. When John paints in words a vision of weird animals, colors, symbolic numbers, he does not want his readers to *view* it literally, but to *understand* its message intellectually. In

describing the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes (5, 6) he presumes as known the conventional symbolism that horns represent power, and eyes, knowledge. Consequently, he means: the lamb (our Lord) is resplendent with power and knowledge. This may be called conceptual symbolism since the symbols evoke concepts, not pictures.

The modern reader often asks: Why did John not write in plain Greek? Above all, because these symbols were known to everyone (just as the symbols of our political cartoons are known to us but may be enigmatic to readers two thousand years hence). Secondly, this literary form was (as some movies are) an escape from reality into a world of fancy which helped the early Christians to bear with persecution. Thirdly, if the book had been written without the visions, symbols, and metaphors, and had fallen into pagan hands, it could have easily been misunderstood because of its nationalism, which was more characteristic of non-canonical apocalypses. Lastly, the apocalyptic literary form lent itself well to the message of reward and punishment.

It does not suffice to know their literary form to understand some of the biblical books; knowledge of the method of interpreting them is also necessary. We shall survey five proposed methods of interpretation of the Apocalypse.

The method of universal history, in vogue from the end of the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, but rejected nowadays by almost all scholars, claimed that Apocalypse purported to forecast the history of the world in seven ages. This originated from the frequent use of the number seven for dividing scenes into groups of seven.

The method of recapitulation presumes that Apocalypse's successive cycles of visions are representations of the same disasters that foretell the end of the world. This method is proposed because there does not seem to be any chronological sequence.

The method of contemporary history propounds that Apocalypse relates only to the times of John.

The method of eschatology limits the message of Apocalypse to the end of time.

The method of comparative religions, sometimes called the mythological method, attempts to explain Apocalypse by indicating oriental religions as the ultimate source of the visions and symbols. Although oriental religions may often have been John's ultimate sources, nevertheless his proximate source is the Old Testament. This comparative method contributes very little to comprehending what John meant by the use of the visions and symbols (see 9, 7-10 n).

No single theory or method, however, is adequate to unlock the meaning of Apocalypse. Moreover, the proponents of these methods hardly ever apply them in their pure form but often borrow from other theories.

In practice, the correct method is to utilize a healthy mixture consisting of all these methods and those of contemporary history and of eschatology as the two predominant ingredients. Ultimately, not all the passages of Apocalypse are clear, and some may never be.

The influence of Apocalypse on poetry is evident, e.g., in Dante's

Divine Comedy; John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; on painting, e.g., in *The Last Judgment* by Michelangelo, and *Paradise* by Tintoretto; on music, e.g., in the oratorio *The Book with Seven Seals* by F. Schmidt, and in popular hymns, e.g., *Jerusalem the Golden*.

An indispensable aid to understanding Apocalypse is its division. A structural division, gaining more and more acceptance in recent years due to A. Feuillet, is the following:

1—3: Introduction

4—11: Although written together with the rest of the book (in the nineties), these chapters refer to the antipathy of the Christians for the incredulous Jews, with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. looming in the background. (The Romans form the background in 12, 1—21, 8.) Among other reasons, a close comparison with the eschatological discourse of Jesus (see par Mt 24) seems to justify this division of Apocalypse. According to this division, the visions of the bowls is not a repetition of the visions of the seals and trumpets, as was generally thought. The vision of the bowls (15, 5—16, 21) treats of the pagan followers of the beast of the sea (Rome), whereas the vision of the trumpets (8, 2—11, 19) is closely associated with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. insofar as this vision of the trumpets signifies the separation of the Jews and Christians. (See 11, 1-2 n for the explanation.) Moreover, the visions of the trumpets in chs. 8—9 are intimately connected with the elaborate ending of the vision of the seven trumpets in Jerusalem as described in 11, 15-19. Finally, the vision of the seals (4, 1—8, 1) belongs most probably to the same background as that of the trumpets because the seals prepare for the trumpets. (For another argument concerning the Jewish background in chs. 4—11, see 8, 7-12 n.) Furthermore, the whole section of Apocalypse 4—11 ends with the general judgment at the end of the world (see 11, 15-19 n). There are, so to speak, two complete apocalypses in one.

12, 1—21, 8: According to almost all scholars, these chapters have as their historical background the antipathy of the Christians for their persecutors, the Roman emperors. These chapters contain the exhortation to the Christians that Rome and its emperor worship will perish like ancient Babylon. (This division of Apocalypse according to the Jewish and Roman backgrounds must not be interpreted so strictly as to exclude a random allusion to Romans in the part of Apocalypse with the Jewish background, and a random allusion to Jews in the part with the Roman background.)

**THE MEANING OF APOCALYPSE SEEN THROUGH
THE STRUCTURAL DIVISIONS**

1—3: Introduction.

4, 1—11, 14: The background is formed by the antipathy of the Christians for the Jews.

11, 15-19: Conclusion. The general judgment at the end of the world.

12, 1—21, 8: The background is formed by the antipathy of the Christians for the Romans.

21, 9—22, 5: Conclusion. The general judgment at the end of the world.

22, 6-21: Epilogue.

Main (common) divisions of the Book of Apocalypse are:

1. Prologue, 1, 1-8
2. The Seven Letters, 1, 9—3, 22
3. The Seven Seals, 4, 1—8, 1
4. The Seven Trumpets, 8, 2—11, 19
5. The Seven Signs, 12, 1—15, 4
6. The Seven Bowls, 15, 5—16, 21
7. Babylon the Great, 17, 1—19, 10
8. The Consummation, 19, 11—22, 5
9. Epilogue, 22, 6-21

PROLOGUE

1

1 The Book—Its Source and Contents The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him, to make known to his servants the things that must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified them through his angel to his servant John;
2 | who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony
3 of Jesus Christ, to whatever he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand.

4 Greetings John to the seven churches that are in Asia: grace be with you and peace from him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven spirits who are before

1, 1: The present title of the book does not come from the inspired author but from a period after his lifetime. The original title, probably lost, may have consisted of the opening words: "The revelation of Jesus Christ." *Revelation*: the Greek word itself, "apocalypsis," in contemporary extrabiblical writings meant fictional revelation of hidden things of God's forthcoming kingdom, "the things that must shortly come to pass." In v. 1 revelation refers to all the book of Apocalypse. *Angel*: the background imagery comes from extrabiblical Jewish apocalyptic writings in which God was pictured as sending angels to reveal the future to a human author.

1, 2-3: *Witness . . . testimony . . . keep*: these are favorite words in Johannine literature.

1, 2: *John*: see Introduction on the author of Apocalypse.

1, 3: *Blessed*: happy. There are six other "beatitudes" in Apocalypse. The second is in 14, 13. *Reads . . . hear the words of this prophecy*: the book will be read in the assembly of Christians. By "prophecy" John does not mean prediction but a consoling instructive exhortation. *For the time is at hand*: see 22, 10 n.

1, 4: The Apocalypse begins like a letter or epistle. In fact, "grace be to you and peace" is characteristically an opening greeting of Paul (Rom 1, 7). "The seven churches" are listed in 1, 11. The author intends his message for all Christians of the whole Church since seven is a symbolic number of completion. *Asia*: western Asia Minor ruled by the Romans. *Who is . . . was . . . is coming*: the triple formula of splitting time in three parts symbolizes the eternity of God the Father. The Greeks used similar formulas to express eternity ("Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus will be," Pausanias X, 12). *Him who is*: a reference to God's name of himself at the burning bush. See Ex 3, 14 n. The Old Testament Greek Bible in Ex 3, 14 reads: "I am the existing one." *Is coming*: this phrase corresponds to "will be." *The seven spirits*: it is disputed whether these words refer to angels as in 8, 2; to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; or to the person of the Holy Spirit as in 4, 5 and 5, 6.

⁵ his throne, | and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who has loved us, and washed us from our
⁶ sins in his own blood, | and made us to be a kingdom, and priests to God his Father—to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ *Christ's Coming* Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth shall wail over him. Even so. Amen.
⁸ | "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty."

I. THE SEVEN LETTERS

I. PREPARATORY VISION

⁹ *John Told to Write His Visions* I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and kingdom and patience that are in Jesus, was on the island which is called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was
¹⁰ in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great

1, 5-6: *To him who has loved us . . . amen:* a solemn doxology.

1, 5: Jesus is described as "the faithful witness" of God through a life on earth and as "the firstborn of the dead." See Col 1, 18 n.

1, 6: *Priests:* see 20, 6 n.

1, 7: *Behold, he comes with the clouds:* a reference to Daniel's Son of Man coming on the clouds. See Dn 7, 16-18 n. *And they also who pierced him:* see Za 12, 10 n. The inspired writer understands Daniel's Son of Man as Christ and though Zacharia refers to a national mourning over a prophet, the writer extends the mourning over Christ's death to all the world. Thus the meaning seems to be a blending of Christ's death on Calvary with his glorious return at the end of the world.

1, 8: Perhaps John is recalling Christ's use of Daniel's expression, Son of Man, in Mt 24, 30. The first (alpha), and last (omega), letters of the Greek alphabet compose a metaphorical expression explained by the remaining two phrases of the verse to mean that God is the only God. A Latin translator added the uninspired explanation: "The beginning and the end." The sense of vv. 7-8 is that by the triumph of Christ (v. 7) everything will find its fulfillment in God (v. 8).

1, 9: *Partner in the tribulation . . . in Jesus:* although these words, strictly speaking, may only refer to John's stay at Patmos during an evangelization voyage, it is generally admitted that he was exiled there. This assertion is based especially on the words "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." See the question of authorship in the Introduction to Apocalypse.

1, 10: *In the spirit:* it is difficult to know whether in this verse

- 11 voice, as of a trumpet, | saying, "What thou seest write in a book, and send to the seven churches, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."
- 12 *Vision of the Son of Man* And I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. And having turned, I saw seven
- 13 golden lamp-stands; | and in the midst of the seven lamp-stands One like to a son of man, clothed with a garment reaching to the ankles, and girt about the breasts with a gold-
- 14 en girdle. But his head and his hair were white as white wool,
- 15 and as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire; | his feet were like fine brass, as in a glowing furnace, and his voice
- 16 like the voice of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars. And out of his mouth came forth a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was like the sun shining in its power.

John means a true historical ecstasy in which he saw and heard things, or a literary ecstasy proper to an apocalypse such as in the book of Daniel. *The Lord's day*: the first explicit mention of the Christian Sunday.

1, 11: The seven letters were never actually sent to the churches but were composed expressly for Apocalypse. There seems to be no majority opinion on why these seven churches were chosen. Because they were under John's jurisdiction? Because each had one feature of the persecution? Because they formed a circle that could geographically be traced from Ephesus to Laodicea? The average distance from city to city is thirty to forty-five miles.

There is a farfetched opinion held by only few commentators that the seven letters foretell seven distinct phases of the universal Church from its beginning to the end of the world.

A book: it is conjectured that the original Apocalypse was written on a papyrus roll fifteen feet long.

1, 12-20: Beginning with the vision of Christ as the "son of man" (v. 13) the passage gleams images from Dn 7, 9-13 and other places in Dn, Ez, Is.

1, 12: *The voice*: see "in the spirit," 1, 10 n. *Seven lamp-stands*: see 1, 20 n.

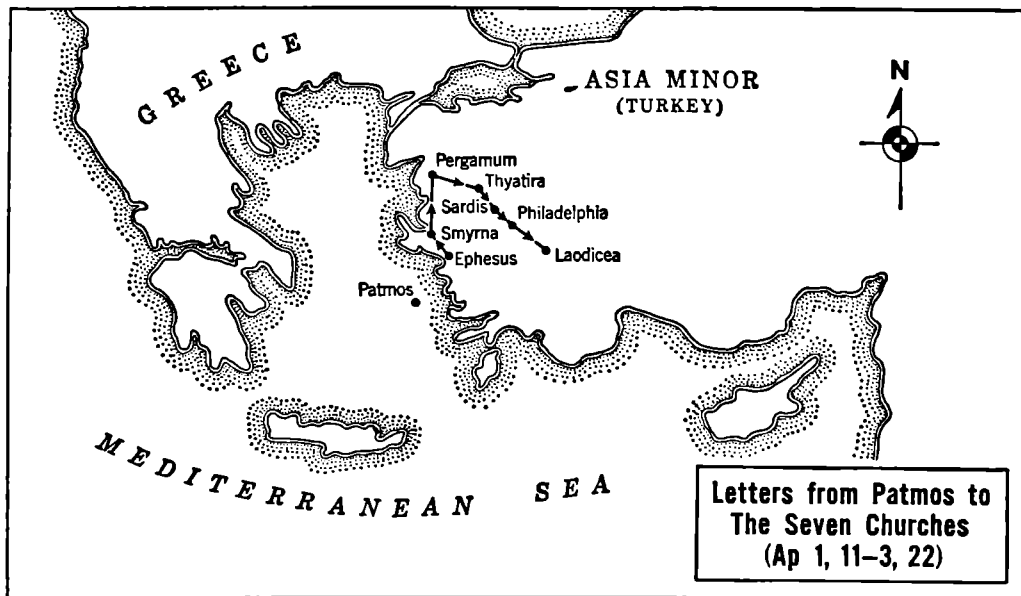
1, 13-16: The author wants to say that Jesus, the son of man, is divine. He therefore describes him symbolically as God.

1, 13: The garment and golden sash describe Jesus as a priest-king.

1, 14: The white hair means antiquity; the divine Christ is as eternal as God the Father. *His eyes were as a flame of fire*: omniscience.

1, 15: His feet are described to symbolize force; his voice to symbolize his all prevailing judgment.

1, 16: *Seven stars*: see 1, 20 n. *Two-edged sword*: a symbol of Jesus' power to judge and punish. This expression is used differently elsewhere (Ps 149, 7).



- 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; 18 I am the First and the Last, | and he who lives; I was dead, and behold, I am living forevermore; and I have the keys 19 of death and of hell. Write therefore the things that thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are to 20 come hereafter. As for the mystery of the seven stars that thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lamp-stands—the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lamp-stands are the seven churches."

II. THE LETTERS

2

- 1 *To the Church at Ephesus* "To the angel of the church at Ephesus write: Thus says he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp- 2 stands: I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men; but hast tried them who say they are apostles and are not, and hast found 3 them false. And thou hast patience and hast endured for my name, and hast not grown weary. 4 "But I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first 5 love. Remember therefore whence thou hast fallen, and repent and do the former works; or else I will come to thee,

1, 17: *I fell at his feet*: the inspired author does not mean to be taken literally any more than the author of Daniel does in similar phrases (Dn 10, 9). *The First and the Last*: John has Jesus describe himself with a divine title (Is 44, 6).

1, 18: A reference to Christ's death and resurrection to eternal life, and his authority ("keys") over hell means he can resurrect the dead.

1, 19: John is told to write about the glorified Christ, already described in vv. 13-18, and to write of other visions. These visions follow in the rest of Apocalypse.

1, 20: There seems to be no majority opinion as to whom John means by the seven angels of the seven churches. Their guardian angels? Their bishops? Their messengers? Perhaps the stars, the angels, and the lamp-stands all together mean the Christian community. The letters reflect the contemporary historical situation of the churches in western Asia Minor.

2, 1: *Ephesus*: see historical background of the city given in Acts 18, 19 n.

2, 2: *Apostles*: at that time there were roving heretics who posed as preachers of the Gospel or as prophets.

2, 3: A reference to an unknown recent persecution victoriously endured.

2, 5: *Move thy lamp-stand out of its place*: the threat refers to

and will move thy lamp-stand out of its place, unless thou
6 repentest. But this thou hast: thou hatest the works of
the Nicolaites, which I also hate.

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says
to the churches: Him who overcomes I will permit to eat
of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.

8 *To the Church at Smyrna* "And to the angel of the
church at Smyrna write: Thus says the First and the Last,
9 who was dead and is alive: I know thy tribulation and thy
poverty, but thou art rich; and that thou art slandered by
those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue
10 of Satan. Fear none of those things that thou art about to
suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into
prison that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation

either the loss of the Ephesian church as the principal church of her
region or to her elimination as a church.

2, 6: *Nicolaites*: a probable reference to the false prophets mentioned in v. 2. The nature of their false teaching is unknown. It is commonly assumed, not proven, that they are some kind of Gnostic sect.

2, 7: *He who . . . let him hear*: this expression refers to our Lord's words (see Mt 11, 15). It expresses an exhortation to follow the advice of the book. *What the Spirit says to the churches*: what is said to one church applies to all churches. See 1, 4 n. Christ and "the Spirit" say the same to the churches. *Him who overcomes . . .*: scholars dispute the nature of the final promises of victory made at the end of each letter. Some say the promises refer exclusively to the afterlife; others believe they mean the afterlife but begun here on earth as the Christian life, the characteristic Johannine notion of life. *Tree of life*: all the letters promise life but under different metaphors. Here the metaphor alludes to Gn 2, 9.

2, 8: *Smyrna*: founded in the twelfth century, destroyed in the seventh, rebuilt in the third century and incorporated into the Roman empire in 133 B.C., to which it remained faithful. From the fourth century to the time of John's writing, the city remained a wealthy seaport. It was the only Asiatic city with the right to have a temple dedicated to Tiberius, Livia, and to the Senate. The New Testament says nothing about the time when Christianity first reached the city, but the gospel probably arrived there at the same time that it reached Ephesus. Since the modern city of Izmir sprawls over ancient Smyrna there have been hardly any excavations. A few unexcavated ruins such as the stadium can be faintly traced by the naked eye.

2, 9: The Christians are poor economically but rich spiritually. *Thou art slandered by . . . a synagogue of Satan*: what makes a true "Jew" is not nationality but faith in Christ.

2, 10: *The devil*: symbolized by the Jews persecuting the Christians. *Ten days*: a symbolic number for a brief period. *Crown of life*: eternal life. See 2, 7 n. Whether John alluded to it or not, ancient writers spoke of the "crown of Smyrna," probably a reference to a garland of flowers adorning the devotees of Cybele.

for ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

- 11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.
- 12 *To the Church at Pergamum* "And to the angel of the church at Pergamum write: Thus says he who has the
- 13 sharp two-edged sword: I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is; and thou holdest fast my name and didst not disown my faith, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was slain among you where Satan dwells.
- 14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of
- 15 Israel, that they might eat and commit fornication. So thou hast also some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaites.
- 16 In like manner repent, or else I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.
- 17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches: To him who overcomes, I will give the

2, 11: *He who overcomes*: see 2, 7 n. *Second death*: eternal damnation. See 20, 14 n.

2, 12: *Pergamum*: it became an important city especially in the third century B.C. The city gave its name to its most famous export, a fine leather material for writing known as parchment. Pergamum was even more famous for its Roman imperial cult which was inaugurated with a temple dedicated to Augustus in 29 B.C. The city was notorious for its cult to several gods, especially Asklepios, the god of healing who made Pergamum the pagan Lourdes of Asia Minor. Coins turned up by the spades of archeologists feature the serpent, Asklepios' symbol. *Two-edged sword*: see 1, 16 n.

2, 13: *Antipas*: an unknown martyr. *The throne of Satan*: it is more probably an allusion to the imperial cult rather than to the cult of Asklepios or to the gigantic white marble altar of Zeus erected in 180-160 B.C., and now on display in Russia. See 2, 12 n.

2, 14: By referring to Balaam (Nm 24, 3) the author is referring to eating food offered to idols which is called "fornication," and/or moral libertinism.

2, 15: *Nicolaites*: the majority opinion identifies them with those at Ephesus as explained in 2, 6 n.

2, 16: *In like manner*: like the church at Ephesus. *Sword of my mouth*: this obscure expression may mean an authoritative condemnation.

2, 17: *Him who overcomes*: see 2, 7 n. *Hidden manna*: this allusion to the apocryphal story of Jeremiah hiding the ark that contains the manna at the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Mc 2, 4-8) may signify here a promise of the Eucharist on earth and of the eternal feast with

hidden manna, and I will give him a white pebble, and upon the pebble a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it.

- 18 *To the Church at Thyatira* "And to the angel of the church at Thyatira write: Thus says the Son of God, who has eyes like to a flame of fire, and whose feet are like fine brass:
 19 I know thy works, thy faith, thy love, thy ministry, thy patience and thy last works, which are more numerous than the former.
 20 "But I have against thee that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach, and to seduce my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat of
 21 things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time that she might repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality.
 22 Behold, I will cast her upon a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent
 23 of their deeds. And her children I will strike with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he who searches desires and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works.
 24 "But to you I say, | to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not hold this teaching and do not know the depths of Satan, as they call him, I will not put upon you any other
 25 burden. But that which you have, hold fast till I come.
 26 And to him who overcomes, and who keeps my works unto
 27 the end, I will give authority over the nations. And he shall

Christ in heaven. *Upon the pebble a new name written*: the meaning of this expression is not known but it is an allusion to the custom of a victorious Greek athlete's reception of a white tablet with his name chiseled on it.

2, 18: *Thyatira*: the city was founded at about 300 B.C. Although it had no natural defenses it was a military colony of Macedonia. The city was famous more for its purple dye industry than for its cult to Apollo which was joined to the cult of the emperor. *Son of God*: used only here in the Apocalypse. *Eyes . . . feet*: see 1, 14 n and 1, 15 n.

2, 20: *Jezebel*: a real woman is referred to under the nickname of Achab's pagan wife who persecuted Yahweh's followers (4 Kgs 9, 22). The same evils are mentioned here as in v. 14.

2, 22: *Cast her upon a bed*: this figure of speech expresses a threat of illness.

2, 23: *Her children*: her followers.

2, 24: *The depths of Satan*: the heretics boasted of their esoteric knowledge.

2, 26-27: *Him who overcomes*: see 2, 7 n.

2, 26: See the explanation of "tree of life" in 2, 7 n.

2, 27: A reference to Ps 2, 9.

- rule them with a rod of iron, and like the potter's vessel
 28 they shall be dashed to pieces, | as I also have received from
 my Father; and I will give him the morning star.
 29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says
 to the churches.

3

- 1 *To the Church at Sardis* "And to the angel of the church
 at Sardis write: Thus says he who has the seven spirits of
 God and the seven stars: I know thy works; thou hast the
 2 name of being alive, and thou art dead. Be watchful and
 strengthen the things that remain, but which were ready
 to die. For I do not find thy works complete before my
 3 God. Remember therefore what thou hast received and
 heard, and observe it and repent. Therefore, if thou wilt
 not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou
 4 shalt not know at what hour I shall come upon thee. But
 thou hast a few persons at Sardis who have not defiled
 their garments, and they shall walk with me in white;
 5 for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be arrayed
 thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out
 of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my
 Father, and before his angels.
 6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says
 to the churches.

2, 28: *The morning star*: some accepted opinions proposed for the meaning of this obscure expression are: a promise of possessing Christ himself since this is his title in 22, 16; or a promise of enlightenment as in the Exultet hymn of Holy Saturday.

3, 1-6: The meaning of the exhortation and the defects are obscure but the general message is: reform or be punished.

3, 1: *Sardis*: highly prosperous in the sixth century B.C., the city was never again so prosperous till after 26 A.D. Its claim to fame was its cult to Cybele; the columns of her temple are still visible. This commercial center, known for its discovery of the art of dyeing wool, was notoriously dissolute. This immorality may account for such a stern letter. *He*: Christ. *Seven spirits*: see 1, 4 n. *Seven stars*: probably these stars, mentioned in 1, 16, are identical in meaning with the "seven spirits." *Dead*: spiritually.

3, 3: *I will come . . . as a thief*: the same message as in Mt 24, 43.

3, 5: *He who overcomes*: see 2, 7 n. *White garments*: in this context the expression symbolizes a joyous victory. *Book of life*: it will be mentioned six more times in Apocalypse. See Ps 68, 29 n. *I will confess*: the same idea as in Mt 10, 32.

- ⁷ *To the Church at Philadelphia* "And to the angel of the church at Philadelphia write: Thus says the holy one, the true one, he who has the key of David, he who opens and
- ⁸ no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens: I know thy works. Behold, I have caused a door to be opened before thee which no one can shut, for thou hast scanty strength, and thou hast kept my word and hast not disowned my name.
- ⁹ Behold, I will bring some of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews, and are not, but are lying—behold, I will make them come and worship before thy feet. And
- ¹⁰ they shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I too will keep thee from the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole
- ¹¹ world to try those who dwell upon the earth. I come quickly; hold fast what thou hast, that no one receive thy
- ¹² crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and never more shall he go outside. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God—the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God—and my new name.

3, 7-13: Similar to the letter to Smyrna (2, 8-11), it contains no blame but encouragement.

3, 7: *Philadelphia*: founded by its namesake, Attalus II Philadelphus, in the second century B.C. The city suffered from an earthquake in 17 A.D. but recovered rapidly thanks to the emperor's purse. The city's fame arose from its wine industry and cult to Dionysius. The archeologist's spade has not dug much here. *Key of David*: the symbolism of this expression taken from Is 22, 22 is explained by the rest of the verse, namely: Christ has complete authority in heaven.

3, 8: *A door to be opened*: if we judge it by the way this expression is used in six other passages to mean non-Christians, perhaps Christ will reward the Philadelphians by giving them opportunities to increase their community with new converts.

3, 9: See 2, 9 n. *Behold . . . feet*: a prediction of the conversion of the Jews as in the Old Testament (Is 60, 14).

3, 10: *The word of my patience*: Christ's teaching on patience or his example of it. *Those who dwell upon the earth*: since this expression is used in six other passages to mean non-Christians, perhaps Christ promises protection from some undetermined natural calamities rather than from persecution.

3, 11: *Crown*: see 2, 10 n.

3, 12: *He who overcomes*: see 2, 7 n. *A pillar*: the victorious Christian will be established solidly in heaven where he will not fear earthquakes as temple pillars fear them. *And never more shall he go outside*: the victorious Christian will be so permanently fixed in Christ's kingdom that he need never fear being left "outside" of it. *I will write . . . the new Jerusalem*: the victorious Christian will be a citizen of heaven.

- 13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 14 *To the Church at Laodicea* "And to the angel of the church at Laodicea write: Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works; thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth; | because thou sayest, 'I am rich and have grown wealthy and have need of nothing,' and dost not know that thou art the wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked one.
- 18 "I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich, and mayest be clothed in white garments, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear, and to anoint thy eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see. As for me, those whom I love I rebuke and chastise. Be earnest therefore and repent. | Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man listens to my voice and opens the door to me, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me. He who overcomes, I will permit him to sit with me upon my throne; as I also have overcome and have sat with my Father on his throne.

3, 14-22: Of all the churches the church of Laodicea receives the sharpest rebuke.

3, 14: *Laodicea*: the city was named after the wife of its founder, Antiochus II, in the second century B.C. It was a center of commerce, administration, banking, manufacturing (of clothing and carpets) and medicine (known for its eye salve, see v. 18). The city was rebuilt without aid from the imperial purse after the earthquake of 60-61 A.D. Many ruins of ancient Laodicea are still visible. See v. 17. *The Amen*: a name for Yahweh attributed to Christ.

3, 15-16: The Christians of Laodicea have not repudiated Christ, but neither have they enthusiastically followed him. This is a frequently quoted text on God's distaste for the spiritually tepid.

3, 17: The Christians thought they were sufficiently spiritual, but in reality they were spiritually poor.

3, 18: True (spiritual) riches must be sought from Christ not from the city's material resources. See 3, 14 n. *Buy from me gold refined by fire*: two interpretations are: seek from me (Christ) proven faith and charity; the expression may signify a new and disciplined spirit. *White garments*: see 3, 5 n. *Eye salve*: see 3, 14 n.

3, 19-20: Christ is severe with the Christians because he loves them.

3, 20: The intimacy spoken of here is that of the Eucharist rather than that of the second coming.

3, 21: Those who imitate Christ's earthly combat will share his glory, but see "him who overcomes" in 2, 7 n.

- 12 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

II. THE SEVEN SEALS

I. PREPARATORY VISION

4

- 1 *The Court of Heaven* After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the former voice, which I had heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things that must
2 come to pass hereafter." Immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon
3 the throne One was sitting. And he who sat was in appearance like to a jasper-stone and a sardius, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in appearance like to an emerald.
4 And round about the throne are twenty-four seats; and upon the seats twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in
5 white garments, and on their heads crowns of gold. And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder; and there are seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.
6 And before the throne there is, as it were, a sea of glass

4, 1: According to Jewish cosmography, there is a "door" connecting the heavens with the firmament below. *The former voice*: "a great voice" in the preparatory vision mentioned in 1, 10.

4, 2: *In the spirit*: see 1, 10 n. God was sitting on the throne.

4, 3: *Jasper-stone*: a jasper is dark, opaque green but here it is probably a partially translucent green since 21, 11 describes it "clear as crystal." It is preferable not to try to find qualities of God symbolized in these precious stones.

4, 4: *Twenty-four elders*: a partial difficulty in identifying the elders stems from the fact that the number twenty-four is used only here. Some say that the twenty-four elders fall into the categories of angels, others identify them as men. The least probable opinions are: the patriarchs; choirs of singers in the Jerusalem temple; the angels of heaven's court. Two more probable opinions are: the great saints of the Old Testament; the saints of the Old and New Testaments.

4, 5: *Lightning . . . thunder*: the common Old Testament embroidery used to describe an appearance of God. (Ex 19, 16-19 n.) *Seven lamps . . . seven spirits of God*: see 1, 4 n.

4, 6: *A sea of glass*: like Ex 24, 10 John pictures the firmament (skies) as the floor of heaven. *Four living creatures*: the description is a composite from passages in Ez and Is. The creatures symbolize the forces of the world. Their multiple EYES represent God's omniscience and omnipresence. Since the time of St. Irenaeus the four

- like to crystal, and in the midst of the throne, and round the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes
 7 before and behind. And the first living creature is like a lion and the second like a calf, and the third has the face, as it were, of a man, and the fourth is like an eagle
 8 flying. And the four living creatures have each of them six wings; round about and within they are full of eyes. And they do not rest day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is coming."
 9 And when those living creatures give glory and honor and benediction to him who sits on the throne, who lives
 10 forever and ever, | the twenty-four elders will fall down before him who sits upon the throne, and will worship him who lives forever and ever and will cast their crowns
 11 before the throne, saying, "Worthy art thou, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and because of thy will they existed, and were created."

5

- 1 *The Scroll and the Lamb* And I saw upon the right hand of him who sits upon the throne a scroll written within
 2 and without, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open
 3 the scroll, and to break the seals thereof?" And no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, was able to open
 4 the scroll or to look thereon. And I wept much, because

creatures have symbolized the four evangelists, but this is not a scriptural meaning.

4, 8: A quotation from Is 6, 3.

4, 10: *Twenty-four elders*: see 4, 4 n.

4, 11: *They existed, and were created*: we would expect: "they were created and therefore they exist." There is no satisfactory explanation for this inversion but it may have been used for the reason of rhythm.

5, 1-14: The general meaning usually agreed upon is that only God and Jesus (the Lamb) can read the scroll that describes future events in the church and in the world hitherto unrevealed ("sealed"). Christ now has the power to reveal them in virtue of his redemption of the world.

5, 1: *Scroll*: there are two other scrolls in Apocalypse (10, 2 and chs. 21-22). *Sealed with seven seals*: the symbolic seven means that the future as revealed in the scroll will remain completely unknown to creatures.

5, 4: *I wept*: a symbolic representation of worrying Christians who sought an answer to persecutions.

no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep; behold, the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, has overcome to open the scroll and its seven seals."

6 And I saw, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had opened the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 *The Three Songs of Praise* And they sing a new canticle, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, | and hast made them for our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign over the earth."

11 And I beheld, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

13 And every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are on the sea, and all that are in them, I heard them all saying, "To him who

5, 5: See 5, 1-14 n. *The lion of the tribe of Juda*: Jesus is symbolized as the lion of Gn 49, 9 and the offspring of David ("the root" of Is 11, 1ff) who "has overcome" the world through his death and resurrection. See Jn 16, 33.

5, 6: *In the midst of*: an Hebraic way of saying "between." *Four living creatures*: see 4, 6 n. *A Lamb*: Christ. *Seven spirits*: see 1, 4 n.

5, 8: *When he had opened*: in Greek, "when he had taken." *The prayers of the saints*: the doctrine of the communion of saints is expressed through the twenty-four elders offering to God the prayers of the saints on earth. See 4, 4 n.

5, 9-14: The songs in Apocalypse were influenced by the prevailing Jewish liturgy.

5, 9: *A new canticle*: see Ps 32, 3 n. *Redeemed us*: see 1 Cor 6, 20 n.

5, 12: *Divinity*: in Greek, "wealth."

sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing and honor and glory and dominion, forever and ever."

- 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshipped him who lives forever and ever.

II. THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST SIX SEALS

6

- 1 **War** And I saw that the Lamb had opened the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!" | And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he who was sitting on it had a bow, and there was given him a crown, and he went forth as a conqueror to conquer.

- 3 **Strife** And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come!" | And there went forth another horse, a red one; and to him who was sitting on it, it was given to take peace from the earth, and that men should kill one another, and there was given him a great sword.

- 5 **Famine** And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come!" And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and he who was sitting on it had a

- 6 balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A measure of wheat for a denarius, and three measures of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the wine and the oil."

6, 1-17: See the structural division in the Introduction to recall that chs. 4-11 have as their background the antipathy of the Christians for Jews.

6, 2: *He who was sitting on it*: for the reason that the three horsemen of the Apocalypse symbolize plagues, and for other reasons, the more common opinion interprets the rider here not as Christ (opinion of St. Irenaeus; see 19, 11-16 n) but as a symbol of war. There are several interpretations which try to specify the war.

6, 3-4: Opinions differ, but the second horseman possibly signifies the Jewish war of 66-70 A.D.

6, 6: About two pints ("a measure of wheat") cost about an average daily wage for a laborer ("a denarius"). The inflationary price is given as soaring five, eight, or twelve times above the normal price. History reports frequent famines throughout the first century A.D. *Do not harm the wine and oil*: there is no satisfactory interpretation. One opinion holds this to be an allusion to the siege of Jerusalem when Titus commanded that the olive groves and vineyards be spared.

- 7 *Pestilence* And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come!"
- 8 And I saw, | and behold, a pale-green horse, and he who was sitting on it—his name is Death, and hell was following him. And there was given him power over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.
- 9 *The Martyrs* And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the witness that they bore.
- 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord (holy and true), dost thou refrain from judging and from avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"
- 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told to rest a little while longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and their brethren who are to be slain, even as they had been, should be complete.
- 12 *Signs on Earth and in Heaven* And I saw, when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair; and the whole

6, 8: *Death*: the heading calls the fourth horseman "pestilence" even though the text names him Death because the Greek word *thanatos* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament frequently renders the Hebrew word *deber* as pestilence. *Hell*: sheol. Death and sheol claim victims in the wake of war, famine, and pestilence. *There was given him . . . of the earth*: in Greek, "power was given them over a fourth part of the earth." *With the beasts of the earth*: the plague of depopulation is mentioned in the Old Testament (Dt 7, 22).

6, 9: *Under the altar*: a possible allusion to an expression of those times, meaning the souls of the saved.

6, 10-11: We may understand the cry for vengeance as a cry to God to show his justice as in the Old Testament; or, perhaps, as a rhetorical expression of the Christians' anxiety (John's weeping also expresses anxiety; see 5, 4 n); or as an utterance of the belief that God's vengeance will hasten the second coming of Christ. The contemporary apocryphal 4 Esd 4, 35-37 parallels this cry and the reply to it.

6, 10: *Who dwell on the earth*: the enemies of God and his chosen ones.

6, 11: *A white robe*: a symbol of jubilation over victory beginning on earth and ending in heaven.

6, 12-17: The general meaning is that this is a description of God's day of punishment, not necessarily and exclusively the end of the world. There are many opinions on the historical eras alluded to. The passage teems with the stereotyped apocalyptic expressions found in both the Old and New Testaments.

13 moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as the fig tree sheds its unripe figs when it is shaken by
 14 a great wind. And heaven passed away as a scroll that is rolled up; and every mountain and the islands were
 15 moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and everyone, bond and free, hid themselves in
 16 the caves and in the rocks of the mountains. And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him who sits upon the throne,
 17 and from the wrath of the Lamb; | for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

III. AN INTERMEDIATE VISION AND THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL

7
 1 *Sealing of the Spiritual Israel* After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding fast the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow over
 2 the earth, or over the sea, or upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, who had it in their power to harm
 3 the earth and the sea, | saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our
 4 God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the children of Israel;
 5 Of the tribe of Juda, twelve thousand sealed; of the tribe of Ruben, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Gad,

6, 17: *The great day*: see 16, 13-14 n.

7, 1-3: The four angels represent God's controlling power over the earth.

7, 2: *The seal of the living God*: God's name was on the seal.

7, 3: An allusion to slaves, soldiers and temple servants who were tattooed with the mark of their masters.

7, 4: The earth is not to be destroyed till the 144,000 are determined for salvation. The symbolic 144,000 resulting from the 12,000 each of the twelve tribes represent the ideal Israel, namely, the Church. See 7, 9-17 n. Compare in Mk 13, 27 and Mt 24, 31 the promise of Jesus to send his angel to gather his elect from the four winds.

7, 5-8: No significance is given to the order of the tribes, since the Old Testament contains at least nineteen different sequences, except that Juda is first because Christ descended from it. The tribe of Dan is replaced by the tribe of Manasses. Many commentators, fol-

6 twelve thousand; | of the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand; of the tribe of
 7 Manasses, twelve thousand; | of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand; of the
 8 tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand; | of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand; of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand sealed.

9 *Blessedness of the Sealed* After this I saw a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and
 10 with palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell
 12 on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, "Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen."

13 *The Seventh Seal* And one of the elders spoke and said to me, "These who are clothed in white robes, who are they?
 14 and whence have they come?" | And I said to him, "My lord, thou knowest." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed

lowing St. Irenaeus, believe Dan's tribe is omitted because an early tradition claimed that the antichrist will come from this tribe.

7, 9-17: There are several opinions on the identity of the "great multitude" of vv. 9-17 as distinguished from the 144,000 in vv. 4-8. One opinion is that the 144,000 represent all Christians in heaven whereas the "great multitude" is representative of the martyrs as stated in v. 14. Another opinion is: the 144,000 symbolize the faithful remnant from Old Testament times, and the great multitude symbolizes the Gentiles.

7, 9-12: The scene probably comes from one of the apocryphal books of Esdras.

7, 9: *White robes*: these do not necessarily symbolize martyrdom. See 6, 11 n. *Palms*: symbol of victory and thanksgiving.

7, 13: The dialogue as a literary device is part of the apocalyptic literary form.

7, 14: See 7, 9-17 n for opinions. *The great tribulation*: many believe that this refers to Nero's persecution. See, however, 6, 1-17 n. *Washed their robes and . . . blood of the Lamb*: the expression does not necessarily refer to martyrs but to the purification through Christ's blood, bringing victory and glory as in 1, 5.

- their robes and made them white in the blood of the
 15 Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and
 serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits
 16 upon the throne will dwell with them. They shall neither
 hunger nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike
 17 them nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst
 of the throne will shepherd them, and will guide them
 to the fountains of the waters of life, and God will wipe
 away every tear from their eyes."

8

- 1 And when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence
 in heaven, as it were for half an hour.

III. THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

I. PREPARATORY VISION

- 2 *Seven Angels with Trumpets* And I saw the seven angels
 who stand before God, and there were given to them seven
 3 trumpets. And another angel came and stood before the altar,
 having a golden censer; and there was given to him much
 incense, that he might offer it with the prayers of all the
 4 saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. And
 with the prayers of the saints there went up before God
 5 from the angel's hand the smoke of the incense. And the
 angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the
 altar and threw it down upon the earth, and there were peals
 of thunder, rumblings, and flashes of lightning and an earth-
 6 quake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets
 prepared themselves to sound the trumpet.

8, 1: Some experts believe that the seventh seal opens the vision of the seven trumpets in vv. 2ff. *Silence*: may mean a symbol of awe before God's majesty (see v. 2) as in *Za* 2, 17. *Half an hour*: found only here in the New Testament and in the Greek Old Testament. The meaning of this expression is unknown.

8, 2: *Seven angels who stand before God*: the contemporary apocryphal Jewish literature spoke of "seven angels of the Presence." Besides Raphael and Gabriel, the five others are found in the apocryphal Book of Henoch. *Trumpets*: in the Old Testament, trumpets frequently announce the end of an era and God's impending judgment.

8, 4: The prayers of the saints make the smoke pleasing to God and bring God's intervention.

8, 5: The plea of the saints is answered by the imminent infliction of Christ's just punishments upon the wicked on earth.

II. THE FIRST SIX TRUMPETS

7 *The First Four Trumpets* And the first angel sounded the trumpet, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and it was cast upon the earth; and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded the trumpet, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the **9** sea; and the third part of the sea became blood, | and there died the third part of those creatures that have life in the sea, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded the trumpet, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning like a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the foun-
11 tains of waters. The name of the star is called Wormwood. And the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many people died of the waters because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, that the third part of them might be darkened, and the day for the third part of it might not shine, and the night likewise.

13 *The Three Woes* And I beheld, and I heard the voice of

8, 7-12: The first four trumpets announce calamities for the material universe. The inspired writer probably thinks of natural calamities which he exaggerates to convey a symbolic meaning. There are many parallels to the Egyptian plagues (Ex 7, 14ff). There is no logical order in the listing of the seven trumpets.

An argument in favor of the Jewish background of this section is based on the expression, "The third part" found twelve times in this passage and in 9, 15. This expression may come from the doctrine of the remnant faithful to God in Ex 5, 1ff and Za 13, 8-9. In the parallel plagues of the bowls (15, 5-16, 21) the expression "the third part" is absent probably because chs. 15-16 are in the second part of Apocalypse where the background is formed by the antipathy of the Christians for the pagan Romans. (See structural division in the Introduction.)

8, 7: *Fire*: lightning. *The third part*: this has no mathematical meaning.

8, 11: The ancients wrongly thought that wormwood was poisonous.

8, 12: The normal light of day and night of the heavenly bodies was reduced.

8, 13: *The inhabitants of the earth*: see 3, 10 n. *Woe*: the three

an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!" because of the rest of the trumpet-voices of the three angels who were about to sound the trumpet.

9

- 1 *The Fifth Trumpet* And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet, and I saw that a star had fallen from heaven upon the earth, and there was given to him the key of
- 2 the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there came up smoke out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by
- 3 the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke there came forth locusts upon the earth. And there was given to them
- 4 power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And they were told not to hurt the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree; but only the men who do not have God's
- 5 seal upon their foreheads. And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torture them for five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.
- 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death will flee from
- 7 them. And in appearance the locusts were like horses made ready for battle; and there were on their heads crowns as it were like gold; and their faces were like the faces
- 8 of men. And they had hair like the hair of women; and

woes correspond to the remaining three calamities. They affect man directly. See 8, 7-12 n.

9, 1-12: There are several opinions on the symbolism of locusts. Does it mean the torment of guilty consciences? The Parthians? The successive invasion of Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans? See 6, 1-17 n.

9, 1: *A star*: a demon. *Pit*: sheol is apparently considered as an exclusive place for devils and the damned.

9, 2-3: The picture seems to be a combination of the Egyptian plague of darkness followed by that of the locusts.

9, 5: *Five months*: most experts agree that the number is not meant mathematically, but there is no satisfactory explanation of its symbolic meaning.

9, 7-10: Scholars cannot explain the symbolism of these details, if there is any in them at all. They may merely be intended to create a general impression of horror. It would not be of much help to discover the meaning if the source of this imagery were proven to be Babylonian, Egyptian, etc.

9, 7: *Crowns*: a probable symbol of power.

- 9 their teeth were like the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was like the sound of many horse-chariots running to battle.
- 10 And they had tails like those of scorpions and there were stings in their tails; and they had power to harm mankind
- 11 for five months. And they had over them a king, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek Apollyon; in Latin he has the name Exterminans.
- 12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are yet to come hereafter!
- 13 *The Sixth Trumpet* And the sixth angel sounded the trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the
- 14 golden altar which is before God, | saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels who are bound
- 15 at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels were loosed who had been kept ready for the hour and day and month and year, that they might kill the third part
- 16 of mankind. And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. I heard the number of them.
- 17 And this is how I saw the horses in the vision: they who sat upon them had breastplates like to fire and to hyacinth and to sulphur, and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and from their mouths issued fire
- 18 and smoke and sulphur. By these three plagues the third part of mankind was killed, by the fire and the smoke
- 19 and the sulphur which issued from their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails.

9, 11: *Abaddon*: destruction. The word is also found in a hymn of the Dead Sea Scrolls. *Apollyon*: destroyer. In Latin he has the name *Exterminans*: not in the Greek text.

9, 13-21: Mainly because the Euphrates river is mentioned, a common opinion holds that the background is an invasion of the Roman empire from east of the Euphrates by the Parthians. On the other hand, according to the theory explained in the Introduction that the background of chs. 4—11 is formed by the Christians' antipathy for the Jews, vv. 20-21 describe metaphorically the refusal of the Jews to be converted.

9, 15: *The hour . . . year*: the four angels were kept ready for a definite moment. *The third part*: see 8, 7-12 n.

9, 16: These are the horsemen loosed by the four angels (v. 15). The total figure given—200,000,000—was probably larger than the population of the world at that time. The symbolic number means an unaccountable number.

9, 17: Ovid and Virgil also mention fire-breathing monsters.

For their tails are like serpents, and have heads, and with them they do harm.

- 20 And the rest of mankind, they who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands so as not to worship the demons and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, 21 which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or of their sorceries or of their immorality or of their thefts.

III. AN INTERMEDIATE VISION AND THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

10

- 1 *The Angel with the Little Scroll* And I saw another angel, a strong one, coming down from heaven, clothed in a cloud, and the rainbow was over his head, and his face was 2 like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little open scroll; and he set his right foot 3 upon the sea but his left upon the earth. And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roars. And when he had cried, the seven thunders spoke out their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things that the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them." 5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and 6 on the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, | and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, 7 that there shall be delay no longer; | but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he begins to sound

9, 20-21: See 9, 13-21 n.

10, 1: The position of the seer shifts from heaven to earth. *Clothed in a cloud*: reminiscent of the Son of Man (Dn 12, 7).

10, 2: *Little open scroll*: there is no adequate reason to explain why the book is small. The angel's stance symbolizes absolute power over the whole earth.

10, 4: If compared with Dn 12, 4 it means perhaps that the time has not yet come for the execution of God's plans.

10, 6-7: After the desolation following the sixth plague that fails to convert the Jews (see 9, 13-21 n), John alludes to the entrance of the Gentiles into the Church, which is the meaning of "the mystery of God" in the Pauline sense of mystery. Then "there shall be delay no longer."

the trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, as he declared by his servants the prophets.

- 8 And the voice that I heard from heaven was speaking with me again, and saying, "Go, take the open scroll from the hand of the angel who stands upon the sea
9 and upon the earth." And I went away to the angel, telling him to give me the scroll. And he said to me, "Take the scroll and eat it up, and it will make thy stomach bitter,
10 but in thy mouth it will be sweet as honey." And I took the scroll from the angel's hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and when I had eaten it my
11 stomach was made bitter. And they said to me, "Thou must prophesy again to many nations and peoples and tongues and kings."

11

- 1 *The Measuring of the Temple* And there was given me a reed like to a rod, and I was told: "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar and those who worship therein.
2 But the court outside the temple, reject it, and do not measure it; for it has been given to the nations, and the holy

10, 9-10: God's word is "sweet" to receive but at times "bitter" to execute. This is from Ez 2, 8—3, 3.

10, 11: *They said*: indefinite plural. John must preach again now that the visions of chs. 6—9 are ended.

11, 1-2: It is generally recognized that John speaks of the terrestrial not of the heavenly Jerusalem temple, and that the measuring symbolizes, as in Ex 40, 1-6, the preservation from harm. According to the majority opinion, the entire description in vv. 1-2, especially of the temple, is to be taken figuratively, because John wrote in the nineties but the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. Many advocates of this majority opinion think that John speaks of the Church or of Christians suffering persecution exteriorly but being preserved interiorly. Another opinion which interprets the passage figuratively (A. Feuillet) is gaining popularity; it asserts that John talks not about the actual material fall of the temple in 70 A.D. but about its meaningful result, namely: the definitive split between the Jews and the Christians. According to this opinion, "Those who worship therein" are the ones to be preserved ("measured"). They are in the interior part of the temple opposed to the "court outside" which will be rejected and harmed ("do not measure it"). The closest parallel to v. 2 in scripture is Lk 21, 24: "And Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the nations be fulfilled." Just as Luke indicates the future "punishment" of the unconverted Jews, so does "the court outside the temple" (Ap 11, 2) correspond to Jerusalem which the Gentiles "will trample underfoot" (Lk 21, 24), thus similarly representing the "punishment" of the unconverted Jews. *Forty-two months*: corresponds to "the times of the nations be ful-

3 city they will trample under foot for forty-two months. And I will grant unto my two witnesses to prophesy for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

- 4 *The Two Witnesses* These are the two olive trees and the two lamp-stands that stand before the Lord of the earth.
 5 And if anyone desires to harm them, fire will come out of their mouths, and will devour their enemies. And if anyone desires to injure them, he must in this manner be
 6 killed. These have power to shut heaven, so that it will not rain during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they desire.
 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will wage war against them,

filled" (see Lk 21, 24 n). In other words, the "suffering" of the unconverted Jews will last forty-two months; this is the symbolic figure for a time of trial taken from Dn 7, 25 ("a year, two years, and a half year,") where it is used to indicate the duration of the persecution by Antiochus. The "forty-two months" separate the Christians from the establishment of the Kingdom of God at the end of the world. The words "punishment" and "suffering" in the foregoing sentences are meant to refer to the period of non-conversion (not persecution) as explained in Rom 11, 15ff.

11, 3: *My two witnesses to prophesy . . . clothed in sackcloth:* beginning with v. 1 it is probably the voice of Christ which is made to speak. The two witnesses preach ("prophesy") and are characteristically clad as preachers. Some of the many opinions based on vv. 5-13 as to the historical identity of the two witnesses are: Moses and Elias; Peter and Paul; martyrs in general. Yet, and what is more important, it is almost certain that John thinks of the two witnesses (whatever or whoever they were historically) as a personification of something else. There are various opinions on this "something else," one of which (Feuillet's) is: the personification of the Christians' testimony of Christ in the face of the unbelieving and hostile Jews during the Church's trial on earth, the duration of which is expressed by the symbolic number "a thousand two hundred and sixty days" or "forty-two months" (see 11, 1-2 n).

11, 4: In this verse the two witnesses of v. 3 are clearly identified as the religious leader Josue and the civil leader Zorobabel (Za 4, 1-3 and vv. 11-14). These are symbolized by two olive trees and one lamp-stand. However, the characteristics of the two witnesses given in vv. 5-13 exclude the possibility of their being Josue and Zorobabel. Yet, what the two leaders personify is not clear.

11, 5-6: The witnesses are now identified with Elias who sent fire to devour his enemies (4 Kgs 1, 10ff and Sir 48, 1) and who controlled the rain (3 Kgs 17, 1). The other witness alluded to is Moses (Ex 7, 17 [the first plague] and 11, 10).

11, 7: After 1,260 days (v. 3), at the end of their career, the beast will kill the two witnesses. The beast stands for the Antichrist

- 8 and will conquer them and will kill them. And their dead bodies will lie in the streets of the great city, which is called mystically Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord also was
 9 crucified. And men from the tribes and peoples and tongues and nations will look upon their bodies three days and a half; and they will not allow their dead bodies to be laid
 10 in tombs. And the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented the inhabitants of the earth.
- 11 And after the three days and a half, the breath of life from God entered into them. And they stood up on their feet, and a great fear fell upon those who saw them.
 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up hither." And they went up to heaven in a cloud,
 13 and their enemies saw them. And at that hour there was a great earthquake and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons; and the rest were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven.
- 14 The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe will come quickly.

according to the almost unanimous opinion of commentators ancient and modern.

11, 8: The martyrdom of the two witnesses is likened to that of Christ in Jerusalem ("the great city"). One opinion why Jerusalem is referred to as "Sodom and Egypt" is: Jerusalem became equivalent to a pagan city since Christ was crucified there.

11, 9-10: Compared with the 1,260 days granted to the two witnesses (v. 3) the "three days and a half" triumph of conquering them is slight.

Though the ministry of the witnesses was exercised in Jerusalem, as the allegory goes, the vision is enlarged to include the entire world, which becomes the enemy of Christ together with the unbelieving Jews. To deny burial was an outrageous insult to the dead. The historical situation of the unbelieving Jews may be meant here as a symbol of a great final revolt against Christ at the end of the world.

11, 12: The violent death of the two witnesses (v. 7), their resurrection after three and one-half days, and their ascension into heaven are not to be taken as historical events which occurred in 70 A.D., or events to happen at the end of the world, but as symbolic of the resurrection of the Church.

11, 13: This verse, according to many commentators, means that God punished the incredulous city of Jerusalem; but "the rest were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven" means that the Jews will be converted in contrast to the impenitent Jews mentioned in 9, 20f; 16, 9 and 11. See 9, 13-21 n. In other words, v. 13 says almost the same as the Epistle to the Romans, i.e.: the Jews will be converted at the end of the world (see Rom 11, 25-26 n).

- 15 *The Seventh Trumpet* And the seventh angel sounded the trumpet; and there were loud voices in heaven saying, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and
 16 ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit upon their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, |
 17 "We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, who art, and who wast, because thou hast taken thy great power and hast
 18 begun thy reign. | And the nations were angered, but thy wrath came and the time for the dead to be judged, and for giving the reward to thy servants—the prophets, and the saints, and those who fear thy name, the small and the great—and for destroying those who corrupted the earth."
 19 And the temple of God in heaven was opened, and there was seen the ark of his covenant in his temple, and there came flashes of lightning, and peals of thunder, and an earthquake, and great hail.

IV. THE SEVEN SIGNS

12

- 1 *The Woman and the Dragon* And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was

11, 15-19: This scene of the general judgment at the end of the world closes the first major section of Apocalypse. See the division in the Introduction.

11, 15: *Loud voices*: perhaps the voices of the twenty-four elders of v. 16.

11, 16: *Twenty-four elders*: see 4, 4 n.

11, 19: The revelation of the ark may symbolize the end of all covenants or the fullest intimate revelation of God. *Lightning . . . hail*: see 4, 5 n.

12, 1—21, 8: In accordance with the structural division of Apocalypse (see Introduction) the background of this section refers to the antipathy of the Christians for the Roman persecutors.

12, 1-18: The woman being with child and crying in travail is a figure similar to that found in Old Testament passages where the woman giving birth is metaphorically described as the beginning of a new era. (See Is 66, 7-9 n.) Besides, the Old Testament frequently presents Yahweh as the spouse of Zion. The closest passage to Ap 12 is Is 26, 17. According to a common interpretation which originated from St. Augustine, the woman in Ap 12, 1-18 symbolizes the Old Testament people of God who give birth to the Messiah. The woman (v. 13) is also the symbol of the New Testament people since she is persecuted by Satan ("dragon"). See 12, 17 n.

12, 1: *In heaven*: in the sky rather than in heaven itself. *Clothed with the sun . . . feet*: the expression means clothed with splendor. *A crown of twelve stars*: a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel or of the twelve apostles.

- under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.
 2 And being with child, she cried out in her travail and was in
 3 the anguish of delivery. And another sign was seen in heaven,
 and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten
 4 horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail was
 dragging along the third part of the stars of heaven, and
 it dashed them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the
 woman who was about to bring forth, that when she had
 5 brought forth he might devour her son. And she brought
 forth a male child, who is to rule all nations with a rod of
 iron; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne.
 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a
 place prepared by God, that there they may nourish her a
 thousand two hundred and sixty days.

- 7 *Michael Overcomes the Dragon* And there was a battle in
 heaven; Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and
 8 the dragon fought and his angels. And they did not prevail,
 9 neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that
 great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is

12, 3: *Dragon*: in v. 9 it is identified as "the devil and Satan."
Seven heads and ten horns . . . seven diadems: see 13, 1 n.

12, 4-6: The woman (the people of God, especially the Old Testament people) gives birth to the Messiah and, before Satan ("dragon") can destroy him and his kingdom, the Messiah is "caught up to God and to his throne" (Christ's life is telescoped here), and the woman (the people of God, especially the New Testament people at the time of John's writing) flees (v. 6) because of the persecution by the Romans ("dragon"). Some scholars specify this as an allusion to the Christians who fled from Jerusalem to Pella in eastern Palestine when the Romans began the siege of Jerusalem in 66-67 A.D. John gives past history in ch. 12. His message is: the battle between Satan and Christ is on but Christ has been victorious through his resurrection. Have courage, therefore, in the face of Roman persecution.

12, 4: *Tail . . . third part . . . earth*: some experts see an allusion to fallen angels; others merely see a symbol of Satan's power.

12, 5: *Who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron*: Jesus is described according to Ps 2, 9. *Caught up to God and to his throne*: a reference to the glorious ascension of Jesus.

12, 6: *A thousand two hundred and sixty days*: the era of persecution of the Church. The 1,260 days equate the forty-two months (see 11, 1-2 n.).

12, 7-12: Several Fathers of the Church wrongly thought that the battle described here between God and the evil angels, or between Michael and Lucifer referred to the fall of the angels at the beginning of history. Actually, the passage means that Christ defeated Satan through his life, death (v. 11) and resurrection, but the devil keeps leading the whole world astray (v. 9), although he has "a short time" (v. 12). See 20, 1-6 n.

called the devil and Satan, who leads astray the whole world; and he was cast down to the earth and with him his angels were cast down.

- 10 *The Song of Triumph* And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now has come the salvation, and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, 11 he who accused them before our God day and night. | And they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb and through the word of their witness, for they did not love 12 their lives even in face of death. | Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell therein. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you in great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time."
- 13 *The Dragon and the Woman* And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he pursued the woman 14 who had brought forth the male child. And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and a half time, away from the 15 serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water like a river, that he might cause her to be 16 carried away by the river. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the 17 river that the dragon had cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was angered at the woman, and went away to wage

12, 13: See 12, 1-18 n.

12, 14: *Eagle*: an Old Testament metaphor for divine help (Ex 19, 4). *A time and times and a half time*: this is the equivalent of "a year, two years, and a half year" or three and one half years, or "forty-two months" or 1,260 days. All of these are synonymous expressions for a time of trial. Here, in v. 14, the time of trial is applied to the duration of the Church's life span on earth. See 11, 1-2 n.

12, 15-16: The torrential river is an Old Testament metaphor for trials (Is 8, 7-8).

12, 17: The devil was angered at the faithful followers of Christ ("the woman") and waged war with the rest of his followers ("the rest of her offspring"). According to a minority opinion (A. Feuillet) Ap 12 speaks primarily of the woman as the people of God (see 12, 1-18 n) and secondarily of Mary, but both the people and Mary are meant to be understood in the literal sense. This minority opinion may be presented thus: one and the same author or authors must be responsible for the fourth Gospel and for the Apocalypse. In the fourth Gospel Mary is described as endowed with at least two special

war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the command-
 18 ments of God, and hold fast the testimony of Jesus. And he
 stood upon the sand of the sea.

13

- 1 *The Beast of the Sea* And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon its horns ten diadems, and upon its heads blasphemous names.
 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and its feet were like the feet of a bear, and its mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave it his own might and great
 3 authority. And one of its heads was smitten, as it were, unto death; but its deadly wound was healed. And all the
 4 earth followed the beast in wonder. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave authority to the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like to the beast, and who will be able to fight with it?"

distinctions. Both these distinctions are ascribed to a "woman" in Ap 12. Thus, the woman in Ap 12 is Mary. The first distinction of Mary in the fourth Gospel is that on Calvary (see Jn 19, 26-27) she has another (spiritual) child besides Jesus, and in Ap 12, 17 the "woman" too has other offspring. The second distinction of Mary in the fourth Gospel is that at Cana and on Calvary she is given the eminent title "woman" and in Apocalypse 12 likewise. The Blessed Virgin Mary in John's Gospel and in Apocalypse is, therefore, reflected upon as having a role in the Church.

12, 18: *He*: the devil.

13, 1-7: Various descriptive traits of the beast derive from Dn 7, 3-21.

13, 1: See 12, 3 n. The majority belief is that the beast represents the Roman emperors, persecutors of the Christians, and prototypes of all future persecuting totalitarian powers. For Palestinians "the sea" here most probably meant the west, namely, Rome and its emperors. By contrast, see the "beast coming up out of the earth" (v. 11), which probably means out of Asia. *Seven heads*: see 17, 8-9 n. *Ten horns*: symbols of power. See 17, 16-17 n. *Ten diadems*: symbols of royalty. *Blasphemous names*: the divine titles of which the Roman emperors boasted, e.g., "Lord."

13, 2: The beast which represents the Roman empire synthesizes the four beasts (Dn 7, 4-6) that symbolize four empires. This is a characteristic example of how the inspired author borrows and transforms Old Testament imagery and thought. *And the dragon gave it his own might and great authority*: a symbolic way of saying that the persecuting Roman emperors are doing the work of Satan.

13, 3: *One of its heads was smitten*: commentators agree that this refers to some short-lived weakening of the Roman empire but they differ when attempting to be more precise. Was it the murder of Caesar? The upheaval after Nero's death?

5 And there was given to it a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to it authority to work
6 for forty-two months. And it opened its mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And it was allowed to wage war with the saints and to overcome them. And there was given to it authority over every tribe, and people, and
8 tongue, and nation. And all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain from the foundation of the world.

9.10 If any man has an ear, let him hear. He who is for captivity, into captivity he goes; he who kills by the sword, by the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 *The Beast of the Earth* And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and it had two horns like to those of a
12 lamb, but it spoke as does a dragon. And it exercised all the authority of the former beast in its sight; and it made the earth and the inhabitants therein to worship the first beast,
13 whose deadly wound was healed. And it did great signs, so as even to make fire come down from heaven upon earth in
14 the sight of mankind. And it leads astray the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the signs which it was permitted to do in the sight of the beast, telling the inhabitants of the earth to make an image to the beast which has the wound of the

13, 5: *Forty-two months*: or three and one-half years. See 11, 1-2 n for the symbolic era of persecution.

13, 6: *Tabernacle*: God's heavenly dwelling.

13, 8: The correct arrangement of the phrase is: "whose names have not been written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of the life of the Lamb who has been slain." *Book of life*: see Ps 68, 29 n.

13, 10: Experts disagree on the original reading and meaning of the verse. *He who is for captivity, into captivity he goes*: Christians must be resigned to captivity. Compare Jer 15, 2 where it is stated that no one can escape God's decrees. *He who kills by the sword, by the sword must he be killed*: some scholars interpret the phrase in the sense of resignation. An interpretation of others is: those who slay the Christians will themselves be slain. Compare Mt 26, 52. The text should not be used in favor of pacifism.

13, 11-12: Commentators in general believe that the second beast performs the works of a false prophet and co-operates with the first beast mentioned in v. 1. It is generally agreed that the second beast personifies all the contemporary pagan cults and institutions which operated hand in glove with emperor worship.

13, 12: *Whose deadly wound was healed*: see 13, 3 n.

13, 13-14: Allusion to feats of magic. *Image to the beast*: allusion

- 15 sword, and yet lived. And it was permitted to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that whoever should not worship the
 16 image of the beast should be killed. And it will cause all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, to have a mark on their right hand or on
 17 their foreheads, | and it will bring it about that no one may be able to buy or sell, except him who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of its name.
 18 Here is wisdom. He who has understanding, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and its number is six hundred and sixty-six.

14

- ¹ *The Lamb and the Virgins* And I saw, and behold, the Lamb was standing upon Mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name

to worship of images of the emperor. *Which has the wound of the sword, and yet lived:* see 13, 3 n.

13, 15: It was a common trick to make images "speak."

13, 16: *A mark*: there are many educated guesses on the "mark" that identified the emperor-worshippers: A brand or tattoo? A certificate? A sign in the allegorical sense? A cross as mentioned in Ez 9, 4?

13, 17: *Buy or sell*: those who did not worship the emperor were persecuted through economic penalties.

13, 18: *Six hundred and sixty-six*: only a few manuscripts read six hundred and sixteen or six hundred and six; the most generally accepted figure is six hundred and sixty-six.

Each Hebrew consonant (not the vowels) had a fixed numerical value. According to the majority of experts, he whose name totals six hundred and sixty-six in Hebrew consonants is Nero, more precisely, KAISAR NERON. John means that Nero is the symbol of the persecuting Roman empire; he does not necessarily mean that Nero was the emperor who was actually persecuting at the time of John's writing. As to the actual significance of six hundred and sixty-six, there are different explanations. One claims that the number signifies a triple failure to attain the perfection of seven. The "beast," (the persecution) therefore, would fail. Scholars still have no adequate answers to explain why John suddenly switched to a cryptogram of Hebrew numbers since many readers of Apocalypse did not know Hebrew. The opinion is often given that John did not want to mention Nero openly lest the Christians incur the wrath of the Romans, but this is not convincing. Yet, to claim that six hundred and sixty-six signifies Nero would suppose the legend of Nero *redivivus*, according to which Nero was to return after his death. There is no evidence of such a legend in the present text.

14, 1: *Lamb*: the resurrected Christ is contrasted with the two preceding beasts. *Mount Sion*: the Old Testament metaphor for the

- 2 of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like a voice of many waters, and like a voice of loud thunder; and the voice that I heard was as of harpers playing on their harps. And they were singing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except those hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were purchased from among men, first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb, | and in their mouth there was found no lie; they are without blemish.
- 6 *The Three Angels* And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell upon the earth and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, | saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give him honor, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and fountains of waters." And another angel followed, saying, "She has fallen, Babylon the great, who of the wine of the wrath of her immorality has given all the nations to drink."

rallying center of the remnant faithful to Yahweh. *Having his name . . . foreheads*: a symbolic way of describing those who invoke the name of Jesus and God the Father. Both are often intimately associated in Apocalypse so that sometimes it is not clear who is meant.

14, 2: The voice was that of choirs of angels singing in heaven.

14, 3-4: *A new song*: Compare Ps 32, 3 n. *Four living creatures*: see 4, 6 n. *The elders*: see 4, 4 n. *Hundred and forty-four thousand . . . virgins*: the majority opinion understands this to mean virgins in the literal sense or, at least, ascetics. Consequently, according to the majority opinion, these 144,000 are different from those of 7, 4-8. *These follow the Lamb*: this may be a metaphor of marriage, if it alludes to Jer 2, 2. There the espousals at Sinai between God and his people is referred to. The chosen people followed Yahweh in the desert during their espousals. *Purchased*: see 1 Cor 6, 20 n.

14, 5: *No lie*: it may mean that they did not invoke false gods or did not hesitate to be loyal to Jesus.

14, 6-11: Three angels foretell the fall of Rome ("Babylon") and of her persecuting emperor-worshippers. The angels call the idolaters to repentance. Compare the vision of 8, 13.

14, 6: *Everlasting gospel*: this unusual and disputed expression does not mean the good news of Christ's Gospel but, according to some, the news of his definitive victory at the end of the world.

14, 8-10: See 16, 7 n on the tone of vengeance.

14, 8: This verse is a composite of different Old Testament texts, especially Is 21, 9. In the Old Testament, Babylon symbolized God's enemies. In Apocalypse, Babylon is used as a symbol for Rome, the

9 And another, a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and
10 receives a mark upon his forehead or upon his hand, | he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured unmixed into the cup of his wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy
11 angels and in the sight of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torments goes up forever and ever; and they rest neither day nor night, they who have worshipped the beast and its image, and anyone who receives the mark of its name."

12 *Blessedness of the Saints* Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and the faith
13 of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, let them rest from their labors, for their works follow them."

14 *Vision of the Judgment* And I saw, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like to a son of man, having upon his head a crown of gold and in his hand a
15 sharp sickle. And another angel came forth out of the temple crying with a loud voice to him who sat upon the cloud, "Put forth thy sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has
16 come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." And he who

latest enemy of God's people whose destruction Apocalypse announces six more times.

14, 9: *Mark*: see 13, 16 n.

14, 10: *The cup of his wrath*: the same metaphor as in Is 51, 17. *Fire and brimstone*: the expression probably comes originally from the description of Sodom and Gomorra's destruction (Gn 19, 24-26). The expression had become the characteristic description of God's judgment (Ez 38, 22).

14, 11: *Forever and ever*: many commentators understand this verse to signify the eternity of punishment in hell.

14, 13: This verse is used in the Mass of Requiem. The faithful will be rewarded immediately after death. They will not have to wait for the second coming of Christ. See 6, 10-11 n. *Blessed*: the second of the seven "beatitudes" in Apocalypse. The next is in 16, 15.

14, 14-20: The metaphors of harvest and vintage are adapted from the Old Testament (Is 63, 1-6) to depict God's judgment of the pagan world at the end of time. This theme is amplified in 19, 11-21.

14, 14-16: The angel in v. 14 is described as a "son of man" because he will "reap," a function usually attributed to Christ, the son of man.

14, 15: *Out of the temple*: it means from God's presence or from the Jerusalem temple as contrasted with the heavenly temple (v. 17).

sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth, and the earth was reaped.

- 17 And another angel came forth out of the temple that is
 18 in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came forth from the altar, he who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put forth thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for its grapes are fully
 19 ripe." And the angel cast his sickle to the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the great wine
 20 press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and there came forth blood out of the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a thousand and six hundred stadia.

15

- 1 *The Angels and the Plagues* And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues. For in them has been completed the wrath of God.
- 2 *The Sea of Glass* And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had overcome the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing on the
 3 sea of glass, having the harps of God | and singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,

14, 18-20: The "altar" in heaven is a symbol of the martyrs' prayers for punishment of persecutors. The punishment is metaphorically depicted as a gory vintage.

14, 19: *Wine press*: compare Is 63, 1-6 n.

14, 20: *Outside the city*: this may be a reference to a popular idea from Old Testament times (Ez 38-39) that God will punish the pagan nations outside of Jerusalem. *Up to the horses' bridles*: similar pictures are found in extrabiblical apocryphal works (*Sibylline Oracles*, 3, 682-684). *A thousand and six hundred stadia*: there are several educated guesses on the symbolic meaning, if there is one at all, of this two-hundred-mile river of blood.

15, 1: God's wrath finds, as it were, its complete expression in these seven plagues.

15, 2-4: John again encourages those who are persecuted. This time through the song of victory of the Christians in heaven over the beast (Roman emperors).

15, 2: *Sea of glass*: compare 4, 6. *Fire*: perhaps a symbol announcing God's imminent judgment.

15, 3-4: Since the Christians symbolically passed through the Red Sea to heaven, they sing the "song of Moses" in remembrance of his song in Ex 15. The same song is called the "song of the Lamb"

- saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages. |
 4 Who will not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? for thou alone art holy. For all nations will come and worship before thee; because thy judgments are manifest."

V. THE SEVEN BOWLS

I. PREPARATORY VISION

- 5 *The Angels and the Bowls* And after this I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony was
 6 opened in heaven, and there came forth out of the temple the seven angels who had the seven plagues, clothed with clean white linen, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles.
 7 And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls, full of the wrath of God who
 8 lives forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the majesty of God, and from his power; and no one could enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

II. THE FIRST SIX BOWLS

16

- 1 *The First Three Bowls* And I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the

(Christ) because he redeemed them. The words of the song in vv. 3-4 are not from Ex 15 but from a chain of Old Testament texts.

15, 5: The temple is in apposition with "the tabernacle of the testimony," which is the tent of witness made by Moses in the desert (found only in Acts 7, 44). "Testimony" or "witness" tent corresponds to the "meeting" tent in the Pentateuch (Ex 27, 21).

15, 6: The seven angels were perhaps clothed "like to a son of man" with royal vestments ("clean white linen") and with priestly vestments ("girt about their breasts with golden girdles"). See 1, 13 n.

15, 7: *Four living creatures*: see 4, 6 n.

15, 8: *The temple was filled with smoke . . . power*: commentators give different meanings according to the different Old Testament passages which they believe are alluded to here. *No one could enter . . . finished*: since the temple is a place of prayer, some scholars think the phrase means that no one could intercede to avert the imminent punishing plagues.

16, 1-12: The seven plagues are similar to those described in The Seven Trumpets (8, 2ff), and both series of plagues resemble those of Egypt. The plagues symbolize divine punishment upon the impenitent pagan emperor worshipers.

16, 1: *Voice*: of God, since his majesty filled the temple (15, 8).

2 seven bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth." And the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a sore and grievous wound was made upon the men who have the mark of the beast, and upon those who worshipped its
 3 image. And the second poured out his bowl upon the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every live thing in
 4 the sea died. And the third poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.
 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Thou art just, O Lord, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because
 6 thou hast judged these things; | because they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, blood also thou hast given
 7 them to drink; they deserve it!" And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God almighty, true and just are thy judgments."

8 *The Second Three Bowls* And the fourth poured out his
 9 bowl upon the sun, and he was allowed to scorch mankind with fire. And mankind were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has authority over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.
 10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and its kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their
 11 tongues for pain. And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their wounds, and they did not
 12 repent of their works. And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and dried up its waters, that a way might be made ready for the kings from the rising sun.

16, 2: *A sore and grievous wound*: compare the sixth plague of boils in Ex 9, 8-12. *Mark*: see 13, 16 n.

16, 4: Compare the first plague of Egypt in Ex 7, 14-25.

16, 6: *Saints and prophets*: the martyred Christians.

16, 7: *The altar*: it means the souls of the dead as in 6, 9-11. The cry may be for God's justice, not for vengeance; or it may be a supplication in the form of a litany of wrath, meaning that the evil is counterbalanced by its punishment, as exemplified in 14, 8-10 where the wine of the wrath of Babylon is counterbalanced by the wine of the wrath of God.

16, 8-9: This does not parallel any of the plagues of Egypt.

16, 9: *And mankind were scorched with great heat*: the faithful were promised to be spared this heat in Is 49, 10; etc. *They did not repent*: see 16, 7 n and 11, 13 n.

16, 10: Compare the ninth plague of Egypt in Ex 10, 21-23.

16, 12: Many see therein an allusive prediction of the Parthians' invasion of the Roman empire by crossing the Euphrates. See 9, 13-21 n.

III. AN INTERMEDIATE VISION AND THE SEVENTH BOWL

- ¹³ *The Unclean Spirits* And I saw issuing from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.
- ¹⁴ For they are spirits of demons working signs, and they go forth unto the kings of the whole earth to gather them together for the battle on the great day of God almighty. | "Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."
- ⁶ And he gathered them together in a place that is called in Hebrew Armagedon.
- ⁷ *The Seventh Bowl* And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air, and there came forth a loud voice out of the
- ⁸ temple from the throne, saying, "It has come to pass!" | And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder, and there was a great earthquake such as never has been since men were first upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it. And the great city came into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was re-

16, 13-14: A symbolic description of how Satan ("dragon"), the toman emperors ("beast") and the "false prophet" go forth to assemble the pagan nations for a final battle against Christ. See 17, 3-14 and 17, 16-17 n. *The battle on the great day*: the battle is metaphorically described in vv. 18-21. In 17, 14 it is described as taking place between ten kings and the Lamb. A more specific description of the battle is given in 19, 11-21. *False prophet*: the same as "the east of the earth." See 13, 11-12 n.

16, 15: The verse is explained as an interpolation or as a dramatic interjection. *Behold, I come as a thief*: the voice of Christ repeats the warning of Ap 3, 3. *Blessed*: the third "beatitude" in Apocalypse. The fourth is in 19, 9. *Garments . . . shame*: experts differ on the precise significance of the metaphors, but the general meaning of spiritual readiness is clear.

16, 16: *Armagedon*: in Hebrew, "Har-Megiddo." This word appears only here. Experts dispute its meaning, but the most probable is "the mountain of Megiddo," even though there is no mountain at Megiddo itself.

Since so many important battles were fought at the city of Megiddo in the plain of Esdraelon (Jgs 5, 19-20), the site became a symbol of catastrophic disasters (see Za 12, 11 n). That is why John chose it as an appropriate site for the symbolic battle between the pagan nations and Christ at the end of the world. For a comparison with the Valley of Josaphat, see Jl 4, 1-2 n.

16, 17-21: See 16, 13-14 n.

16, 19: *City*: Rome, symbolically called "Babylon." *Came*: split.

membered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of his
 20 fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountain
 21 could not be found. And great hail, heavy as a talent, came
 down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God
 because of the plague of the hail; for it was very great.

VI. BABYLON THE GREAT

17

1 *The Woman on the Scarlet Beast* And there came one
 of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, and he spoke
 with me, saying, "Come, I will show thee the condemnation
 2 of the great harlot who sits upon many waters, | with whom
 the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the in-
 habitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her
 immorality."

3 And he took me away in spirit into a desert. And I saw a
 woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of
 4 blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the wom-
 an was clothed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold
 and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden
 cup full of abominations and the uncleanness of her im-
 5 morality. And upon her forehead a name written—a mystery
 —Babylon the great, the mother of the harlotries and of the
 6 abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunk with
 the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of
 Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

16, 21: *Heavy as a talent*: a hundredweight. Compare the eighth
 plague of Egypt in Ex 9, 22ff.

17, 1-2: *Harlot*: Rome. Harlotry and "fornication" (v. 2) symbolize
 the idolatry of emperor worship. *Sits upon many waters*: see 17, 15 n
 for the angel's explanation of this phrase, which comes from Jer 51,
 13. *Kings . . . inhabitants of the earth*: emperor worship was widely
 practiced.

17, 3: *A desert*: impure spirits were thought to dwell in deserts
 but here desert is employed because the sordid beast and the woman
 dwell there. *Woman . . . beast . . . seven heads and ten horns*:
 see 17, 7ff for the angel's explanation. This is the same beast of the
 sea as in 13, 1.

17, 4: The description of the woman (Rome) highlights the
 seductive qualities that emperor worship exerted throughout the Roman
 empire.

17, 5: *A mystery—Babylon*: "a mystery" means a symbol, i.e., the
 woman's symbolic name was Babylon which in turn was the symbolic
 name for Rome. See 14, 8 n. The Roman prostitutes wore a ribbon
 on their forehead with their name written on it.

17, 6: An allusion to the Roman persecution of the Christians.

7 *The Angel's Explanation* And the angel said to me,
 "Wherefore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery
 of the woman, and of the beast that carries her which has
 8 the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that thou
 sawest was, and is not, and is about to come up from the
 abyss, and will go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the
 earth—whose names have not been written in the book of life
 from the foundation of the world—will wonder when they see
 9 the beast which was, and is not. And here is the meaning
 for him who has wisdom. The seven heads are seven moun-
 tains upon which the woman sits; and they are seven kings; |
 10 five of them have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet
 come; and when he comes, he must remain a short time.
 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is moreover himself
 eighth, and is of the seven, and is on his way to destruction.
 12 "And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who
 have not received a kingdom as yet, but they will receive
 13 authority as kings for one hour with the beast. These have
 one purpose, and their power and authority they give to the
 14 beast. These will fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb will

17, 7: *Seven heads*: see 17, 8-9 n. *Ten horns*: see 17, 16-17 n.

17, 8-9: Almost all commentators agree that the beast means Rome. But is it a specific Roman emperor or Nero *redivivus*? See 17, 16-17 n. We follow the latter as explained in 17, 11 n. "The seven heads" (of the beast in v. 8) are the "seven mountains," i.e., the seven hills upon which Rome was built.

17, 9-11: Most commentators identify the "seven kings" thus: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius; the fifth is Nero, and the sixth ("one is") actually reigning, Vespasian; the seventh ("the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a short time") who will rule only a few years is Titus (79-81); the eighth (see 17, 11 h), a type of Nero *redivivus* (see 17, 16-17 n) because of his cruelty, is Domitian (81-96 A.D.). Since Apocalypse was written during Domitian's reign it is commonly supposed that John pretends, by fictional antedating, to be writing during the reign of Vespasian (69-79).

17, 11: *And the beast that was*: this beast was a type of Nero *redivivus*, namely, Domitian (see 17, 9-11 n). Since John actually wrote during Domitian's reign (81-96), but pretends to have been writing during Vespasian's reign (67-79), John can thus say that an emperor (Domitian) cruel like Nero (therefore a Nero *redivivus*) will come, and John can speak of him as "the beast that was, and is not" (because Nero was dead), "is moreover himself eighth, and is of the seven, and is on his way to destruction" fighting his way back to the throne as explained in 17, 16-17 n.

17, 12: *And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings*: from Dn 7, 24. See 17, 16-17 n.

17, 14: See 17, 16-17 n. For the full picture of the battle see 19, 11-21.

overcome them, for he is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings, and they who are with him, called, and chosen, and faithful."

- 15 And he said to me, "The waters that thou sawest where
16 the harlot sits, are peoples and nations and tongues. And
the ten horns that thou sawest, and the beast, these will hate
the harlot, and will make her desolate and naked, and will
17 eat her flesh, and will burn her up in fire. For God has put
it into their hearts to carry out his purpose, to give their
kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are accom-
18 plished. And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city
which has kingship over the kings of the earth."

18

- 1 *The Fall of Babylon* And after this I saw another angel
coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the
2 earth was lighted up by his glory. And he cried out with a
mighty voice, saying, "She has fallen, she has fallen, Babylon
the great; and has become a habitation of demons, a strong-
hold of every unclean spirit, a stronghold of every unclean
3 and hateful bird; | because all the nations have drunk of
the wrath of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have
committed fornication with her, and by the power of her
wantonness the merchants of the earth have grown rich."

17, 15: The entire Roman empire is displayed as a sea.

17, 16-17: After Nero died in 68 A.D., a legend grew that he would return alive (*redivivus*) to lead the Parthians across the Euphrates to reconquer Rome. His allies would be Rome's vassals ("the ten kings," v. 12). The vassals will rule for a brief time ("one hour," v. 12) with Nero ("the beast," v. 12). Then Nero and his allies will fight the Lamb (Christ) and be defeated (v. 14). "The ten horns" (v. 16) symbolize Rome's vassal kings and allies (v. 12) who will join "the beast" (Nero *redivivus*) to fight the "harlot" (Rome).

17, 18: *Great city*: Rome, as the prototype of all corrupt and persecuting empires.

18, 1ff: John has an angel proclaim that the fall of Rome (Babylon) has already been accomplished (v. 2). This apocalyptic characteristic is intended to impart hope and encouragement to the persecuted Christians.

18, 1: The description of the angel as Yahweh is based on Ez 43, 2.

18, 2: The anticipated fall of Rome is also stated in 14, 8. *A habitation of demons . . . bird*: these are stereotyped Old Testament metaphors used to describe the fall of Babylon (Is 13, 19-22), Edom and Nineve.

18, 3: *Because all the nations . . . immorality*: this repetition of 14, 8 and 17, 2 is probably meant to justify the vengeance (vv. 6-7). *The merchants . . . rich*: this idea is pursued in vv. 11-20.

4 Her Sins and Punishment And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Go out from her, my people, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached even to heaven, and the Lord has remembered her iniquities. Render to her as she also has rendered, and give her the double according to her works; in the cup that she has mixed, mix for her double. As much as she glorified herself and gave herself to wantonness, so much torment and mourning give to her. Because in her heart she says, 'I sit a queen, I am no widow, and I shall not see mourning.' Therefore in one day her plagues shall come, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be burnt up in fire; for strong is God who will judge her."

9 Dirge of the Kings And the kings of the earth who with her committed fornication and lived wantonly will weep and mourn over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for fear of her torments, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city, for in one hour has thy judgment come!"

1 Dirge of the Merchants And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her; for no one will buy their merchandise any more: merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones and pearls, and fine linen and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all vessels of ivory, and all vessels of precious stone, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble, | and cinnamon and amomum and

18, 5: *Her sins have reached even to heaven*: consequently, God "forced" to intervene by destroying Rome.

18, 6: *Render to her as she also has rendered*: these words are most probably modeled after Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon, "as he has done, do to her" (Jer 50, 15) and "Repay her for her deeds; as she has done, do to her" (Jer 50, 29). How is such an unchristian cry for revenge to be explained in the New Testament? Perhaps John thinks more of an Old Testament parallel text for vengeance than of vengeance itself. The whole Apocalypse is practically a tissue woven of parallels from the Old Testament. In other words, John develops the Old Testament doctrine of temporal retribution to a point of final triumph of the faithful over the wicked.

18, 7-8: Compare Is 47, 8-11 and the parallel warning against Rome in the *Sibylline Oracles* (5, 168-171).

18, 9-10: The text seems based on Ez 26, 15-19 where the princes of the sea lament the fall of Tyre.

18, 9: *Kings . . . fornication*: same idea in 17, 2.

18, 12-13: Compare the trade of Rome with that of Tyre in Ez 7, 1-24: *Slaves*: traded perhaps to become gladiators. *Souls of men*: allusion to white slavery.

spices, and ointment and frankincense, and wine and oil, and fine flour and wheat, and beasts of burden and sheep and
 14 horses, and chariots and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruit which was the desire of thy soul departed from thee and all the fat and splendid things perished from thee, and
 15 men will find them nevermore. The merchants of these things, who grew rich by her, will stand afar off for fear of her
 16 torments, weeping and mourning, | and saying, "Woe, woe the great city, which was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and gilded in gold, and precious stone, and pearls; |
 17 for in one hour riches so great were laid waste!"

Dirge of the Mariners And every shipmaster, and every one who sails to a place, and mariners, and all who work
 18 upon the sea, stood afar off, | and cried out as they saw the place of her burning, saying, "What city is like to this
 19 great city?" And they cast dust on their heads, and cried out weeping and mourning, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all who had their ships at sea were made rich out of her wealth; for in one hour she has been laid waste!"
 20 Make merry over her, O heaven, and you the saints and the apostles and the prophets, for God has judged your cause upon her.

21 *The Angel's Promise* And a strong angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, "With this violence will Babylon, the great city, be over-
 22 thrown, and will not be found any more. And the sound of harpers and musicians and flute-players and trumpet will not be heard in thee any more; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in thee any more; and sound of
 23 millstone will not be heard in thee any more. And light of lamp will not shine in thee any more; and voice of bridegroom and of bride will not be heard in thee any more; because thy merchants were the great men of the earth, for by thy sorcery all the nations have been led

18, 17-19: Compare the lament of the mariners over Tyre in Ez 27, 28-34.

18, 20: Note the contrast to the preceding dirges.

18, 21: *Angel*: angels play a large role in the introductions of visions and in their conclusions. *Millstone, and cast it . . . any more*: this is probably based on the same symbolic act against Babylon as described in Jer 51, 60-64. Note the inspired writer's skill in adapting literary material.

18, 22-23: Compare Ez 26, 13.

18, 23: *Sorcery*: perhaps idolatry is principally meant.

²⁴ astray. And in her was found blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain upon the earth."

19

¹ *The Angelic Song* After these things I heard as it were a loud voice of a great crowd in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! ²salvation and glory and power belong to our God. | For true and just are his judgments, who has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hands."

³ And again they have said, "Alleluia! And the smoke of her goes up forever and ever!"

⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who sits on the throne, and they said, "Amen! Alleluia!"

⁵ And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you who fear him, the small and the great!"

⁶ *The Song of Triumph* And I heard as it were a voice of a great crowd, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, "Alleluia! for the Lord, ⁷our God almighty, now reigns! | Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb ⁸has come, and his spouse has prepared herself. | And she has been permitted to clothe herself in fine linen, shining, bright. For the fine linen is the just deeds of the saints."

⁹ And he said to me, "Write: Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said

18, 24: Another reason for Rome's impending doom is her persecution of the Christians (stated also in 16, 6).

19, 1-10: The joy over Rome's doom continues.

19, 1: *Alleluia*: a Hebrew word meaning "Praise the Lord."

19, 3: Compare Is 34, 10 which is also the basis for Ap 14, 11. Some scholars see an allusion to the burning of Rome.

19, 4: *Twenty-four elders*: see 4, 4 n. *Four living creatures*: see 6 n. Both groups appear here for the last time in Apocalypse. *men! Alleluia!*: these words are also frequently repeated in present-day liturgies.

19, 7: *The marriage of the Lamb*: the first appearance of this glorious theme of Christ and his faithful in Apocalypse.

19, 9: *And he said*: the angel who usually explains the visions. *loved are they*: the fourth "beatitude" refers to the martyrs and prophets and to the faithful. The fifth beatitude is mentioned in 20, 6. *These are true words of God*: this phrase does not mean that the preceding visions of Rome's fall, beginning from ch. 17, are to be taken

¹⁰ to me, "These are true words of God." And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Thou must not do that. I am a fellow-servant of thine and of thy brethren who give the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

VII. THE CONSUMMATION

¹¹ *The Divine Warrior* And I saw heaven standing open; and behold, a white horse, and he who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and wages war.
¹² And his eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; he has a name written which no man
¹³ knows except himself. And he is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood, and his name is called The Word
¹⁴ of God. And the armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

as literal predictions. Its main lesson is encouragement, for there will be a jubilant final victory at the end of the world in spite of the present but passing victories of God's enemies. This is the message of Apocalypse at and for all times.

19, 10: The message embodied in the vision was so stunning that John depicts himself as paying homage in true oriental style. The inspired writer may here be allusively attacking the false angel worship prevalent in his day.

19, 11-16: To encourage his readers, John creates the New Testament's most magnificent portrait of Christ as victorious judge and warrior at the end of the world when he leads the faithful in heaven against pagan persecutors.

19, 11: Most biblical critics identify the rider of the white horse with Christ. See 6, 2 n. The first epithet "Faithful" is said of him in 1, 5, the second epithet "True" is applied to him in 3, 7, and both are said of him in 3, 14.

19, 12: *And his eyes are as a flame of fire*: this may mean that his glance penetrates everything when he judges (see 1, 14 n and 2, 18). *Many diadems*: the judge is also a king, wearing perhaps a tiara. *He has a name . . . himself*: maybe, John envisions Christ wearing a banner with the inscription: Yahweh. Another opinion is: the "name which no man knows" means that no creature can know Christ's nature. Compare 2, 17.

19, 13: *And he is clothed in a garment sprinkled with blood*: the picture of Yahweh as he returns with a bloodstained garment from conquering his people's enemies at the end of the world. *And his name is called The Word of God*: Christ's proper name is not meant here but his office, namely: God speaks to men through him as in Heb 1, 1ff. *The Word*: See Jn 1, 14 n.

19, 14: *Armies*: it is disputed whether they are the angels, or the saved who are in heaven (especially the martyrs), or both.

- 15 *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* And from his mouth goes forth a sharp sword with which to smite the nations. And he will rule them with a rod of iron, and he treads
- 16 the wine press of the fierce wrath of God almighty. And he has on his garment and on his thigh a name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords."
- 17 *Defeat of the Beast and the False Prophet* And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather
- 18 yourselves together to the great supper of God, | that you may eat flesh of kings, and flesh of tribunes, and flesh of mighty men, and flesh of horses, and of those who sit upon them, and flesh of all men, free and bond, small and great."
- 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against him who
- 20 was sitting upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was seized, and with it the false prophet who did signs before it wherewith he deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and who worshipped its image. These two were cast alive into the pool of fire that burns with
- 21 brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that goes forth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

19, 15: *Sword . . . nations*: our Lord comes to judge and condemn the enemies. Compare Wis 18, 15ff. *Rule them with a rod of iron*: see 12, 5 n. *He treads the wine press . . . almighty*: see 19, 13 n.

19, 16: See 19, 11-16 n. The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah* is the best expressive musical commentary of Christ as the most powerful king and lord.

19, 17-18: John probably believes the sun to be the uppermost point in the heavens. He places the angel there because of an announcement of great importance, namely: the invitation to all the birds to feast on dead enemies about to fall at the hands of Christ. Ez 49, 17-20 inspired this imagery. See Ez 38—39 n.

19, 19: *Beast, and the kings of the earth*: a reference to Rome and the pagan allied kings in 17, 12-14. See 17, 16-17 n. All these enemies are also symbols of forces opposing God at the end of the world.

19, 20: *False prophet*: the beast of the earth in 13, 11-18. See 13, 11 n. *Pool of fire that burns with brimstone*: see 14, 10 n. This pool is not Hades (sheol) or the bottomless pit, but a place of eternal damnation and punishment for sinners.

20

¹ *Satan Chained* And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand ³ years. And he cast him into the abyss, and closed and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished. And after that he must be let loose for a little while.

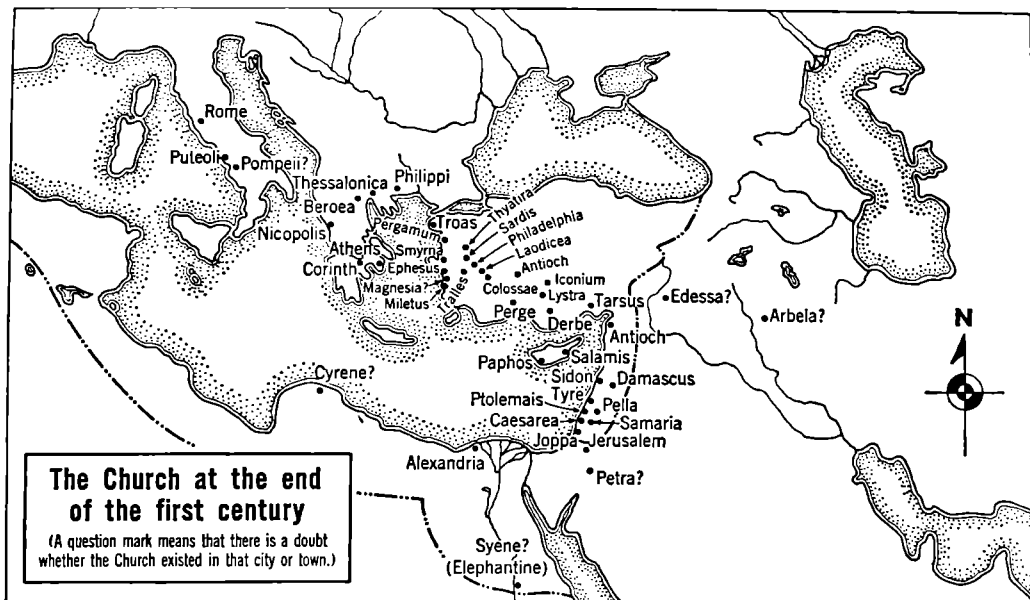
⁴ *Reign of the Saints* And I saw thrones, and men sat upon them and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the

20, 1-6: According to the majority opinion, John has an angel chain Satan for a "thousand years," a symbolic number representing the life span of the Church on earth as a time of trial. The 1,000 years would explain the "short time" mentioned in 12, 12. After the "thousand years," that is, at the end of the world, Satan will be released to prepare for the final battle against Christ. The main objection to the majority opinion is, perhaps, that John would have Satan chained and inactive for one thousand years (20, 3) and simultaneously have him lead astray the whole world (12, 7-12 n).

The main minority opinion differs. It holds that after the persecution, i.e., the time of John's writing, and before the final combat between Christ and the nations (Gog and Magog), there would be an era of spiritual rejuvenation (1,000 years). This minority view is based on the Book of Ezekiel. A spiritual renewal is described in Ez 37 after the Babylonian persecution, and the final combat against Gog and Magog is recorded in Ez 38-39. John would be following Ezekiel's pattern by having a spiritual reawakening follow the Roman persecution.

Based on an erroneous opinion, held by several Fathers of the Church, it was taught that after one thousand years and before the end of the world, there would be another one thousand years of peace and material prosperity on earth for Christians living with Christ. (An example of the exaggerated material prosperity may be found in Apocryphal 4 Esd 7, 26-36.) This doctrine of the millennium or chiliasm has never been condemned as heretical by the Church, but was only declared erroneous. In 1941 the Church warned against the mitigated millenarianism professed in some South American circles. Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses adhere to a form of millenarianism.

20, 4: *Thrones, and men sat . . . given to them*: there is no adequate explanation of v. 4. According to one opinion, the meaning of "I saw thrones, and men sat upon them and judgment was given to them" is: Our Lord presides over the heavenly court which recognizes the Christians' right to be associated with the kingdom of the Messiah. These Christians seem differentiated from the "beheaded" martyrs in the later part of v. 4. *The souls of those . . . beheaded . . . came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years*: the dead martyrs (13, 15) are privileged to enjoy the "first resurrection" (v. 5) with



witness to Jesus and because of the word of God, and who did not worship the beast or his image, and did not accept his mark upon their foreheads or upon their hands. And they
 5 came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life till the thousand years
 6 were finished. This is the first resurrection. | Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection! Over these the second death has no power; but they will be priests of God and Christ, and will reign with him a thousand years.

7 ***Satan Loosed*** And when the thousand years are finished, Satan will be released from his prison, and will go forth and deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and will gather them together for the
 8 battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth and encom-
 9 passed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city. And fire from God came down out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast
 10 | and the false prophet; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 ***The Last Judgment*** And I saw a great white throne and the one who sat upon it; from his face the earth and heaven

Christ in heaven for "a thousand years," i.e., while the Church simultaneously continues on earth and before the general or second resurrection at the end of the world.

20, 5: *The rest of the dead*: those Christians who, after the first resurrection, lived during the "thousand years" on earth till the end of the world and therefore died physically, will be resurrected at the end of the world at the second resurrection.

20, 6: *The second death*: eternal damnation, as v. 14 clearly shows. *But they will be priests . . . a thousand years*: this phrase refers to the "Blessed" dead (i.e., the martyrs) who are in heaven while the Church continues on earth. This is the fifth "beatitude." (The sixth is in 22, 7.)

20, 7-10: At the end of the 1,000 years, at the end of the world, Christ will battle Satan's followers, called Gog and Magog (Ez 38). According to 19, 20, Christ will confine Satan to hell "where are also the beast and the false prophet" (vv. 9-10). The site of the battle is metaphorically situated in Jerusalem, "the beloved city." Therefore, John implies that the beast (the Roman empire), paganism and Satan, will outlive the Christians of his day.

20, 10: *False prophet*: see 13, 11 n.

20, 11: *The one*: God. *Earth and heaven fled away*: to give place to a new heaven and a new earth (21, 1).

- 12 fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the scrolls, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged each one, according to their works.
- 14 And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire.
- 15 This is the second death, the pool of fire. | And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the pool of fire.

21

- ¹ *New Heaven and New Earth* And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth

20, 12: *Dead, the great and the small*: all the dead. This expression is found three times in Apocalypse. *Scrolls*: registers that show the deeds of all good and evil men. *Another scroll . . . the book of life*: registers showing the deeds of only those who will be saved. See 3, 5 n.

20, 13: All the dead and Hades are personified as two monsters. Hades is coupled with the sea to mean that all the dead will be judged. How strongly John emphasizes that God's judgment will be passed on *all* men is shown in v. 12. This is a clear New Testament doctrine (Mt 25, 32).

20, 14: *Hell and death . . . pool of fire*: the two personified monsters are eliminated. "Death" is eliminated because no one will die any more, as 1 Cor 15, 26 also says: "Hell," i.e., Hades, the abode of the dead, will no longer exist. *This is the second death*: eternal damnation. *The pool of fire*: hell, place of the eternally damned. The attribution of "second death" to "the pool of fire" means that only he who is cast into hell is definitely *dead*, because he is separated from God.

20, 15: Same idea as explained in 20, 14 n. *Book of life*: see 20, 12 n.

21, 1-22, 5: After having shown the passing away of the old earth and heaven (20, 11) and the banishment of the wicked to hell forever (20, 14-15), John depicts God's eternal kingdom in heaven.

21, 1-2: The new heaven, the new earth (Is 65, 17-25) and the new Jerusalem are metaphors for heaven. They are not meant to signify literally a new material earth. See 2 Pt 3, 10-13 n. *The sea is no more*: in the metaphorical new world the sea is, perhaps, omitted for the reason that its storms and tempests did not fit into a happy world, or that the sea was considered the home of God's enemies (see Ps 73, 13-15 n).

2 passed away, and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from
 3 God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they will be his people, and God himself will be with
 4 them as their God. | And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

5 *The Promise* And he who was sitting on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new!" And he said, "Write, for
 6 these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who thirsts I will give of the fountain
 7 of the water of life freely. | He who overcomes shall possess these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my
 8 son. | But as for the cowardly and unbelieving, and abominable and murderers, and fornicators and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars, their portion shall be in the pool that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

9 *The Heavenly Jerusalem* And there came one of the seven angels who had the bowls full of the seven last plagues; and he spoke with me, saying, "Come, I will show thee
 10 the bride, the spouse of the Lamb." And he took me up

21, 2-5: The liturgy aptly accommodates this passage in the ceremony of the dedication of a church.

21, 2: Extrabiblical books from the time of Christ mention the popular idea of a new Jerusalem descending from heaven to replace the earthly city (4 Esd 7, 26). *A bride adorned for her husband*: compare 19, 7.

21, 4: *God will wipe away every tear from their eyes*: a quote from Is 25, 8.

21, 6: *It is done*: one of several interpretations is that the new creation is now ended. *I am the Alpha and the Omega*: see 1, 8 n.

21, 7: Compare 7, 17.

21, 8: See the same idea in 20, 14-15 n.

21, 9—22, 5: The majority of scholars, regardless of their different opinions on the previous parts of Apocalypse, believe that John is speaking of the Jerusalem in heaven at the end of the world. Even 21, 24-27 which appear to refer only to the faithful on earth, refer really to the same heavenly Jerusalem at the end of the world. These verses borrow heavily from the Old Testament. The Jerusalem in heaven (21, 9—22, 5) is the apex of Apocalypse.

21, 9-10: The new Jerusalem is described as the bride of the Lamb.

- in spirit to a mountain, great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from
- 11 God, | having the glory of God. Its light was like to a precious stone, as it were a jasper-stone, clear as crystal.
- 12 And it had a wall great and high with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the
- 13 children of Israel. On the east are three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the
- 14 west three gates. And the wall of the city has twelve foundation stones, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.
- 15 And he who spoke with me had a measure, a golden reed, to measure the city and the gates thereof and the wall.
- 16 And the city stands foursquare, and its length is as great as its breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, to twelve thousand stadia: the length and the breadth and
- 17 the height of it are equal. And he measured its wall, of a hundred and forty-four cubits, man's measure, that is,
- 18 angel's measure. And the material of its wall was jasper; but the city itself was pure gold, like pure glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation, jasper; the second,
- 19 sapphire; the third, agate; the fourth, emerald; | the

21, 11: *Having the glory of God*: because the city came from God. *Jasper-stone, clear as crystal*: see 4, 3 n.

21, 12: *Twelve gates*: the frequent use of twelve in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem stresses its perfection.

21, 13: *Three gates*: a repetition from Ez 48, 30-34, to symbolize stability.

21, 14: The new twelve tribes are the twelve apostles. It is characteristic of John to transpose Old Testament images to New Testament realities.

21, 15-17: Compare the measuring in 11, 1-2. The symbolic meaning of the measuring here is disputed. One opinion is that it means unchangeableness since the measuring is done by God.

21, 16: Length, breadth, and height equally measured 1,500 miles. The symmetry symbolizes the city's perfection.

21, 17: The city wall was 216 feet high. *Man's measure . . . angel's measure*: it means that the angel used the common measuring standards of humans.

21, 18-21: As often happens in interpreting passages of Apocalypse, commentators do not agree as to which Old Testament passages are used in the descriptions of the materials.

21, 19-20: The twelve precious stones of the twelve foundations of the city wall are almost identical with the twelve precious stones of the high priest's breastplate described in Ex 28, 17-21 and 39, 10-14. The twelve stones on the breastplate were inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes. See 21, 14 n.

fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; 21 the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; that is, each gate was of a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 ***God and the Lamb Give It Light*** And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the 23 temple thereof. And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine upon it. For the glory of God lights it up, 24 and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. And the nations shall walk by the light thereof; and the kings of the earth shall bring 25 their glory and honor into it. And its gates shall not be shut 26 by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall 27 bring the glory and the honor of nations into it. And there shall not enter into it anything defiled, nor he who practises abomination and falsehood, but those only who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.

22

1 ***The River and Tree of Life*** And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming forth from 2 the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the city street, on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit according to each month, and the leaves for the healing of the nations.

21, 22—22, 5: It is clear that John intends a spiritual meaning in metaphorical terms, but commentators differ on the precise spiritual meaning.

21, 22: Heaven will be so spiritual that God and Jesus will replace the temple. The same idea is more plainly stated in Jn 2, 19-21.

21, 22—22, 3: Notice the gradual identification of God with the "Lamb," Jesus.

21, 23: One opinion is that God's glory is far superior to man's notion of earthly splendor.

21, 24-27: See 21, 9—22, 5 n.

21, 24: A symbolic reference to the conversion of the Gentiles. See Is 60, 1—63, 6 n. *And the nations shall walk by the light thereof*: quotation from Is 60, 3.

21, 25: A symbol of heavenly security.

21, 27: *There shall not enter into it anything defiled*: an adaptation of Is 52, 1.

22, 1-2: The joy of heaven is depicted through allusions to Ezechiel. (See Ez 47, 1-12 n.)

22, 2: *In the midst of the city street*: a reference to either Ez 47, 12 or Gn 3, 3.

- ³ *The Throne of God and of the Lamb* And there shall be no more any accursed thing; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.
- ⁴ And they shall see his face and his name shall be on their
- ⁵ foreheads. And night shall be no more, and they shall have no need of light of lamp, or light of sun, for the Lord God will shed light upon them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

EPILOGUE

- ⁶ *Confirmation* And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show to his servants what
- ⁷ must shortly come to pass. | And behold, I come quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this
- ⁸ book." And I, John, am he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the
- ⁹ feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, "Thou must not do that. I am a fellow-servant of thine and of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"
- ¹⁰ *Words of Christ* And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand.
- ¹¹ He who does wrong, let him do wrong still; and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he who is just, let him be just still; and he who is holy, let him be hallowed

22, 3: Compare 3, 21 and Za 14, 11.

22, 4: *His name shall be on their foreheads*: a metaphorical way of saying that they shall belong to him.

22, 5: Almost the same notion as explained in 21, 23 n.

22, 6: *And he said*: the angel said. *These words*: the book of Apocalypse. *The God of the spirits of the prophets*: God who gives charisms to the prophets. See 1 Cor 12, 10. *His servants*: the inspired writer and his disciples.

22, 7: *"I come quickly"*: John probably has the angel interrupted by the voice of Jesus saying these three words of encouragement. *Blessed*: this is the sixth "beatitude." The seventh is in 22, 14.

22, 8-9: Approximately the same idea as explained in 19, 10 n.

22, 10: *"He [the voice of Jesus] said to me"* [John]: it means that this teaching must not be sealed and be put away till some future time, as is usually done with an apocalyptic book. The contents of this book are to be disclosed now. For a comparison see 10, 4 n.

22, 11-12: This is not a blanket permission to sin. It means that the good and the wicked will exist till the end of time when each will be rewarded or punished accordingly.

12 still. | Behold, I come quickly! And my reward is with
 13 me, to render to each one according to his works. I am
 the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the begin-
 14 ning and the end!" Blessed are they who wash their robes
 that they may have the right to the tree of life, and that
 15 by the gates they may enter into the city. Outside are the
 dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the mur-
 derers, and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and prac-
 tises falsehood.

16 **Final Attestation** "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to
 you these things concerning the churches. I am the root and
 17 the offspring of David, the bright morning star." And the
 Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears
 say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come; and he who
 18 wishes, let him receive the water of life freely. I testify to
 everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book.
 If anyone shall add to them, God will add unto him the
 19 plagues that are written in this book. And if anyone shall take
 away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God
 will take away his portion from the tree of life, and from the
 holy city, and from the things that are written in this book.
 20 He who testifies to these things says, "It is true, I come
 21 quickly!" Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord
 Jesus Christ be with all. Amen.

22, 13: Jesus identifies himself with God. See 1, 8 n.

22, 14: *Blessed*: this is the seventh "beatitude." *Wash their robes*: see 7, 14 n. *Tree of life*: see 22, 2. *By the gates . . . city*: see 21, 9.

22, 15: A condemnation of the wicked. Compare 21, 27.

22, 16: *To you*: to John. Jesus, by becoming man, heralds God as the morning star announces the sun.

22, 17: There are almost as many opinions as commentators on the meaning of this verse.

22, 18-19: *I testify*: John has the voice of Jesus continue. *If anyone shall add . . . take away*: this idea comes, most likely, from Dt 4, 2 and 13, 1.

22, 20: *He who*: voice of Jesus. *Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!*: John says this. *I come*: this is the seventh time Jesus speaks these words in Apocalypse.

22, 21: There is great disagreement on the original reading of the last verse.